

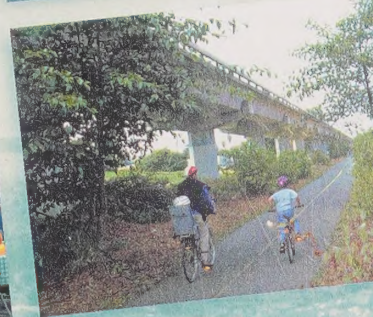
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August 30, 1999

City of El Cerrito

GENERAL PLAN

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EL CERRITO



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CITY OF EL CERRITO

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

August 30, 1999

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Chapter 1 A Guide to the General Plan

CHAPTER 1 A GUIDE TO THE GENERAL PLAN

A. Key Principles

El Cerrito is a City with numerous positive attributes – great location, pleasant climate, stable residential neighborhoods, good transit and highway access, numerous park and recreational facilities, and involved citizens. Today, the City is in a position to reinforce its established residential areas with dynamic commercial areas that provide needed tax revenues, shopping opportunities, and locally created jobs.

This General Plan is our vision for achieving more balanced residential, commercial, and civic uses within the city. The process of preparing this General Plan took place in 1998 and 1999 as the City embarked on a program to bring its 1975 General Plan up to date so that it could better meet future challenges. This process resulted in the following ten key principles designed to improve the quality of development and the long-term fiscal health of the City so that it can remain an attractive place to live and work:

1. No major changes in land-use patterns are expected to occur.
2. Emphasis will be on quality of development.
3. Incentives, if used, will have clear criteria and limits.
4. Emphasis will be on impacts of development, not on the type of development itself.
5. Increased residential development, where allowed, must be done with care in order to enhance neighborhoods.
6. New development in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor will be encouraged to take place in mixed-use activity centers that may extend up selected perpendicular streets in order to allow a more pedestrian friendly environment.
7. The preservation and enhancement of natural features – trees, creeks, natural open space areas – and historical features will be a high priority for the City.
8. The City should have distinct destination areas, including commercial areas, a civic center and community meeting places.
9. Development should contribute to the fiscal health of the City while minimizing adverse impacts.
10. Access should be improved by balancing automobile use with improved transit, bicycle, and pedestrian opportunities.

B. Organization of the Plan

The General Plan is organized into chapters, with several appendices containing technical or explanatory materials:

- Chapter 1 (this chapter), A Guide to the General Plan, provides an introduction to the General Plan and a brief summary of how it was developed.
- Chapter 2, Strategic Approach, focuses on the small number of strategic actions that will ensure the achievement of this General Plan's primary goals and policies.
- Chapter 3, Planning Background, summarizes background information on the City of El Cerrito, which is useful in understanding the context of the General Plan.
- Chapter 4, Community Development and Design, addresses land use, community design, housing, and growth management. The section on land use contains the future land use plan map and a description of the land use categories used in the plan.
- Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation, addresses the movement of people and materials by transit, automobiles and trucks, bicycles, and walking.
- Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services, deals with three topics: parks, recreation and open space, non-residential civic and community facilities, and public services and infrastructure.
- Chapter 7, Resources and Hazards, addresses natural and historic resources in its first major section. The natural resources discussion includes wildlife, air quality, and storm runoff. The second major section addresses hazards – geologic hazards, fires, flooding, and noise.
- Chapter 8, Putting the Plan to Work, addresses how the Plan can be used as an effective management tool to achieve its goals.

Chapters 4 through 7 set forth goals and policies that address specific planning issues. These goals and policies are preceded by a discussion of relevant background information and trends, and followed by implementation strategies.

The appendices contain additional information, including a glossary of planning terms. The list of appendices is contained in the table of contents.

C. What is a General Plan

Purpose and Approach

The El Cerrito General Plan sets forth the City's policies regarding the types and locations of future land uses and activities. It describes the desired character and quality of development as well as the process for how development should proceed.

While this General Plan can address many City issues, factors beyond El Cerrito's control have significant influence over its future land use and development patterns:

- Market forces play an important role in determining what types of uses are economically feasible and, therefore, built.
- Land use and transportation decisions in other cities and counties, and by state and regional agencies, affect El Cerrito.
- Our system of property rights places certain limitations on what cities can do in prescribing future land uses.
- California environmental law requires that we designate land uses in accordance with available infrastructure capacity (streets, sewer, water, natural resources, etc.).

Thus in creating this General Plan, El Cerrito went through a process that ascertained the community's values for future land uses and activities, and balanced these values with market factors, city revenues, environmental constraints, and private property rights.

The El Cerrito General Plan reflects the aspirations and values of El Cerrito's residents and their elected representatives. The City Council and Planning Commission will use the Plan in considering land use and planning-related decisions. City staff will use the Plan on a day-to-day basis to administer and regulate land use and development activity. Citizens can use the Plan to understand the City's approach to regulating development, protecting resources, and upholding community values.

Goals, Policies, Implementing Measures, and Strategies

The El Cerrito General Plan is based on the key principles described in the first section of this chapter. Those key principles provide the foundation for the Plan and strategic direction for the goals, policies, and implementation strategies that form the core of the Plan.

The following definitions will help readers understand and distinguish between these important components of the General Plan:

- ***Goals*** are general statements of values or aspirations held by the community. Because goal statements are general in nature, they tend to have broad community support and are not typically controversial.
- ***Policies*** are more precise expressions about how a particular goal will be interpreted or implemented. Policies may include guidelines, standards, maps, or a combination of these components:
 - ***Guidelines*** are policy statements that provide a set of detailed instructions about how to conduct some aspect of land use regulation.

- **Standards** are policy statements that include a specific, quantified measure of performance.
- **Maps** are graphic expressions of policy, typically showing geographic base data and thematic information.
- **Implementing Measures** are actions the City takes to put the goals and policies into practice. These might include ongoing programs sponsored by the City (e.g., road maintenance); discrete, time-specific actions (e.g., widen the sidewalks in a particular area); or further planning actions (e.g., develop a design plan or enact an issue-specific ordinance).
- **Strategies** are a compilation of implementing measures, intended to focus efforts on a limited set of action items that are essential in realizing the vision expressed in the General Plan. Because of their importance, these strategies are presented in a separate chapter, Chapter 2, of this Plan.

Key to Goal and Policy Identifications

Chapter 4	LU = Land Use
	CD = Community Design
Chapter 5	T = Transportation
Chapter 6	PR = Parks and Recreation
	CF = Community Facilities, other than recreation
	PS = Public Services
Chapter 7	R = Natural and Historic Resources
	H = Hazards

Updating the General Plan

Periodically, California cities must update their general plans to conform to changes in State law and other legal requirements, and to reflect changes in the land development patterns since the last plan was adopted. In addition, conditions and assumptions, which form the basis of any plan, can change due to changes in population, economy, development in surrounding cities, and other factors.

The General Plan adopted in 1975 presented a coherent and logical approach to development in the City. It has served the community well and, together with the numerous useful ideas presented during public meetings, has been the basis for the update process that produced this General Plan.

Since the preparation of the 1975 General Plan, many changes have occurred that affect it. For example:

- The computer revolution has created new businesses and new demands for land uses that could not have been anticipated in 1975. Also, there has been a reduction in traditional manufacturing and industrial uses.
- Retail trends have changed the way people shop, including the decline of the classic commercial strip and the rise of “big boxes” (like Target and Home

Depot), factory outlets, and places where people simply go for something to do—where shopping becomes entertainment.

- Traffic on Interstate 80 and San Pablo Avenue has increased dramatically. New high occupancy vehicle lanes and on/off ramps on Interstate 80 create new challenges and opportunities for managing traffic on our local streets.
- The City's financial management has faced new challenges, particularly from tax-limitation measures such as Propositions 13 and 4. The result is a greater emphasis on revenue-generating land uses (i.e., commercial uses) to support vital City services and facilities, such as police, fire, and parks and community centers.
- New residents and businesses have joined the El Cerrito community, bringing new ideas and values that need to be taken into account along with those of long-term residents and businesses.

For these reasons, and more, it was essential that the General Plan be updated—as it will be necessary to update the Plan again in the future as trends and developments that cannot be foreseen continue to change El Cerrito's economy, population, and environmental context.

This General Plan continues the major themes of the 1975 General Plan, but places more emphasis on design quality and implementation. The changes made to the 1975 General Plan are intended to:

- Bring the Plan into conformance with current state law.
- Ensure internal consistency.
- Respond to issues raised by City residents in the public participation process.
- Address shortcomings in the 1975 Plan identified by City staff.
- Align the Plan's policies with the key strategies for addressing major issues, as set forth in Chapter 2, to ensure that the City is in a position to respond to challenges and strategic opportunities.

These changes will help ensure that El Cerrito's General Plan remains a viable, effective tool for the next 20 years. However, none of the revisions result in a significant departure from the direction and policies set forth in the previous General Plan, nor will they result in significant changes in the amount, type, or rate of development in the City.

The El Cerrito Housing Element, adopted by the City Council in August 1991, is not included in the current update program because the regional fair-share allocations will not be available until July 2000. However, the existing housing policies have been incorporated into the relevant sections of the Plan, and the Housing Element in its entirety has been included in Appendix A.

Impact of Plan Adoption

Once adopted, the General Plan is the basis for land use and other municipal decisions. The plan itself is not a regulation – for implementation, it relies on tools such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, design review, capital improvement program, and a variety of special purpose ordinances and programs. These implementation measures are briefly described and related to General Plan policies in subsequent chapters.

In accordance with California law, the City's zoning ordinance and other implementation tools must be consistent with the General Plan. This means that the zoning ordinance will need to be reviewed after adoption of this Plan to ensure consistency. During the preparation and public review of zoning ordinance amendments, topics such as building height, densities, and allowed uses will be discussed for specific parcels. The general rule is that the zoning ordinance can be more restrictive than the General Plan, but cannot allow a greater level or completely different type of development than that described by the policies and standards in the General Plan.

D. Process for Developing this General Plan

Public Participation

The El Cerrito General Plan was developed through a three-phase process, consisting of issue exploration, alternatives analysis, and policy development. The City Council and Planning Commission provided overall direction, with the assistance of a Process Team of citizen representatives who worked closely with the consultant team and City staff to guide the public process for updating the Plan.

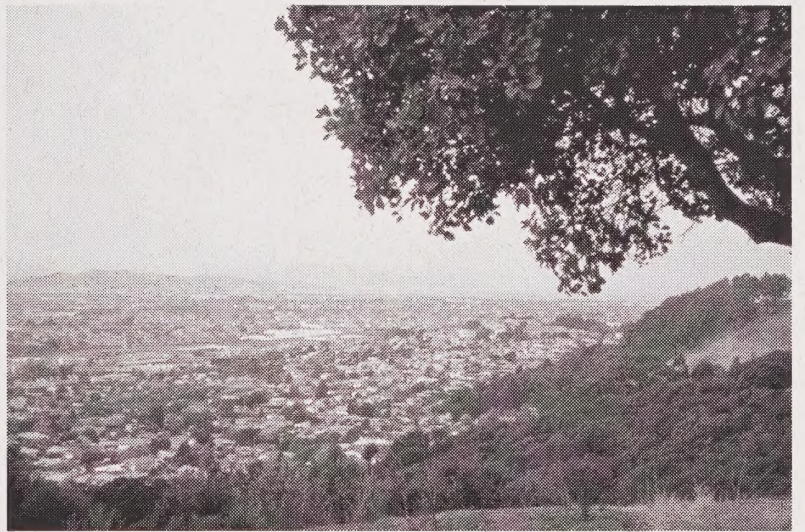
The first phase, the "Exploration" phase, consisted of a number of exercises to gauge the opinions of residents and business people. That phase ended with a joint meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Process Team to provide direction for the "Alternatives" phase of the process. This phase consisted of a second round of neighborhood workshops that provided the basis for development and assessment of alternative development strategies, leading to development and selection of a "preferred strategy." The preferred strategy then provided the basis for the third phase of the process: preparation of the draft General Plan.

Key documents produced in the update process included the Existing Conditions Working Paper, Alternatives Assessment Report, draft General Plan and draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Existing Conditions Working Paper was updated to become the Existing Conditions Report, serving as a background resource to the General Plan and EIR. The draft General Plan was reviewed in public discussion and hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council, and refined before adoption.

Environmental Review

As noted above, the General Plan process has included the preparation of an EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Descriptions of the environmental setting and the specific public actions resulting from the General Plan are included in the body of individual sections of the Plan. These sections, supplemented by additional information in the Existing Conditions Report, provide the description of the General Plan update process and its environmental setting for the EIR.

The EIR provides the project summary, impact analysis, and associated mitigation measures. It also addresses other mandated components of an EIR for a General Plan. Following circulation of the draft El Cerrito General Plan and Draft EIR, responses were prepared for the comments received, and the Final EIR was certified prior to adoption of this updated General Plan.



Chapter 2 Strategic Framework

CHAPTER 2 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The El Cerrito General Plan establishes the goals and policy framework for the future of El Cerrito. This Chapter, the Strategic Framework, outlines and prioritizes the key implementation strategies to achieve these goals and realize the community's vision for its future. It is a plan of action that efficiently manages the community's limited resources by concentrating efforts on actions that are most advantageous to reaching the community's goals.

Strategy planning is the process of identifying a community's strengths and challenges and developing the prioritizing specific implementation steps for achieving the community's shared vision. Strategic planning creates a framework for making decisions and allocating limited resources. In short, this Strategic Framework represents El Cerrito's view on what needs to be done and how it is going to get it done.

Thus, the strategic framework identifies the major issues facing El Cerrito, describes the overall vision for the City's future, and outlines the Strategic Action Plan – the actions, projects, and programs that the City and community will initiate to achieve the City's vision. To accomplish the goals of the El Cerrito General Plan, the City will pursue seven major strategic initiatives in partnership with other organizations, neighboring cities, and agencies, both locally and regionally.

A. Major Issues

As the City faces the new millennium, it must strive to preserve its historical character and traditions, while rising to new opportunities and challenges. The General Plan will be an important tool for protecting El Cerrito's past and guiding its future development. The current status of the City can be summarized as follows:

- **Residential Uses.** The residential sector, especially the single-family areas, is generally in good condition, but the public facilities that serve residents, such as parks and recreation facilities, are suffering from deferred maintenance due to lack of funds.
- **Retail Uses.** The size of the retail sector, in terms of square feet, is actually quite large in relation to the population of the City. Many stores, however, have low sales per square footage, and residents find that they must go elsewhere for many basic necessities as well as specialized goods. The El Cerrito Plaza area is especially underutilized.
- **Office Uses.** There is a very small amount of office space within the City and few parcels large enough to accommodate newer office park development.

- **San Pablo Avenue.** Development within the San Pablo Avenue Corridor is generally unattractive and does not provide a friendly environment for pedestrians.
- **Fiscal Condition.** The lack of a healthy retail and office sector contributes to the City's precarious fiscal position in maintaining adequate, much less high quality, public facilities and services.
- **Transit Opportunities.** The existence of El Cerrito's two BART stations provides an opportunity for future development that would take advantage of the transit system.

VISION FOR EL CERRITO IN THE YEAR 2020

In the year 2020, El Cerrito is a vibrant, attractive community. Its single-family, residential character is complemented by a mix of other housing types, active shopping areas, and business and professional offices that take advantage of the City's work force and proximity to a good transit system. El Cerrito is a place where people feel safe and value being physically out in the community. It is typical to see children walking home from school, people strolling their neighborhoods in the evenings, seniors exercising outdoors in the parks, and people bicycling during all times of the day.

El Cerrito's shopping areas are clustered near the Del Norte and Plaza BART Station areas and in several smaller concentrations located along San Pablo Avenue. These areas encourage people to walk from store to store, have a cup of coffee at a sidewalk café, and meet friends. The stores provide a convenient shopping experience for the residents of El Cerrito and surrounding communities, as well as people who work in the nearby offices. Several specialty stores attract people from throughout the region.

The City has a number of small to mid-sized office buildings that house small or branch financial, consulting, telecommunications, computer, and bio-technical companies. A number of small startup software and research companies have testing and limited production capabilities. Both BART station areas contain telecommuting centers for residents of the City and other people who share spaces for meetings. The offices are both attracted and supported by interesting retail stores and business services.

El Cerrito's strategic location has contributed significantly to its success. People are able to come by train from Solano County and other parts of West Contra Costa County and transfer to the BART system. El Cerrito also has become a link from Contra Costa and Alameda counties to the northern Bay Area counties – eastern Marin, Sonoma, and western Napa – because of its access to those areas. Congestion has increased, but less than in other Bay Area communities because of increased opportunities for residents to work and shop without using a car.

The City financial situation has improved substantially from previous years. The City tax base is strong and vibrant. Retail and office uses produce adequate sales and property tax revenues. The younger and more affluent residents who have been attracted to the City contribute to its financial health. Parks and community facilities now are maintained, as they should be. Most significantly, El Cerrito now has a civic center area that includes a modest but attractive City Hall and public gathering spaces.

To deal with existing deficiencies, El Cerrito must simultaneously address two major strategic issues:

- **Residential Quality.** El Cerrito must maintain its high-quality single-family areas and improve the multi-family areas of the City, especially with regards to design and compatibility with surrounding areas.
- **Paying for Services.** The City must increase its tax base in order to maintain the parks and other public services and facilities that make El Cerrito an attractive place to live.

Many other issues are included in this General Plan. The above strategic issues, however, are the highest priority – they must be successfully addressed if El Cerrito is to achieve its vision for the 21st century.

B. Strategic Action Plan

This section details the Strategic Action Plan, including the actions, projects, and programs the City and community will implement to achieve its desired vision. The Action Plan includes both policy-oriented actions, as well as more specific projects to develop facilities, programs, and services by various City departments.

The City does not have all the necessary resources to undertake all the actions at one time. Thus the Action Plan phases projects and programs over time. In addition, it identifies ongoing projects and programs as well as those projects that could be implemented as opportunities for funding or implementation arise.

The Action Plan is not a static plan. Over time, resources, opportunities, and new challenges will inevitably present themselves to the community. The Action Plan should be periodically reviewed and revised as the primary actions have been accomplished and new actions, programs, and priorities are developed to face new challenges. Likewise, the City's vision should be periodically tested and revisited – the community's goals and direction may also need adjustments.

The following pages present the actions, projects and programs the City and the community will implement to achieve its desired future. For each action, the plan identifies:

- **Responsibility.** The responsible organization(s) or entity that could most appropriately assume the lead role for the implementation of the action;
- **Time Frame.** The time frame within which the action could reasonably be undertaken (immediate: 0-1 year; near-term (1-3 years); mid-term (3-5 years); and long-term (5+ years); and
- **Funding.** The potential funding sources that could possibly support the action.

Implementation Principles

Four principles guide the overall implementation of the Strategic Action Plan:

- **Build on what we have.** Successful existing programs must continue to be supported as new initiatives are implemented.
- **Encourage public-private and community partnerships.** The successful implementation of the Action Plan is contingent upon the continued support and cooperation the entire community, including the public and private sectors, community groups, and residents.
- **Identify roles and responsibilities.** The dedication, commitment, and accountability provided by a lead organization are key to successful implementation. Identifying the lead organization and establishing a process for accountability will turn plans into reality.
- **Monitor and evaluate ongoing progress.** Periodic assessments help to identify barriers to success and determine if “mid-course corrections” are needed. Furthermore, demonstrated success helps sustain and increase community support, commitment and enthusiasm toward common goals.

The Strategic Action Framework illustrated in Figure 1 provides an outline of specific actions that can be carried out over time to achieve the City’s vision, goals and policies for the future. The Strategic Action Framework establishes a series of projects and programs in a phased, prioritized framework directing the City’s efforts and limited resources to accomplish the General Plan goals. It is intended as a document to guide the overall coordination of implementation activities in the community.

Implementation actions and programs are assigned a relative priority according to the following two-tiered Strategy Framework – Primary Actions and Supporting Actions.

Primary Action Strategies

Seven Primary Action Strategies are identified as the most important steps to accomplishing the vision for El Cerrito. These seven Primary Action Strategies are selected because of their critical value in creating the greatest leverage (economically and physically) in the near term to achieve the City’s goals. The Primary Action Strategies are discussed in further detail in the next section of this chapter, and include the following:

1. Adopt a Del Norte Area Transportation Access/Land Use Strategy
2. Adopt a Midtown Area Revitalization Strategy
3. Adopt the El Cerrito Plaza Revitalization Strategy
4. Create an Economic Development Strategy
5. Adopt San Pablo Avenue Corridor Design Guidelines

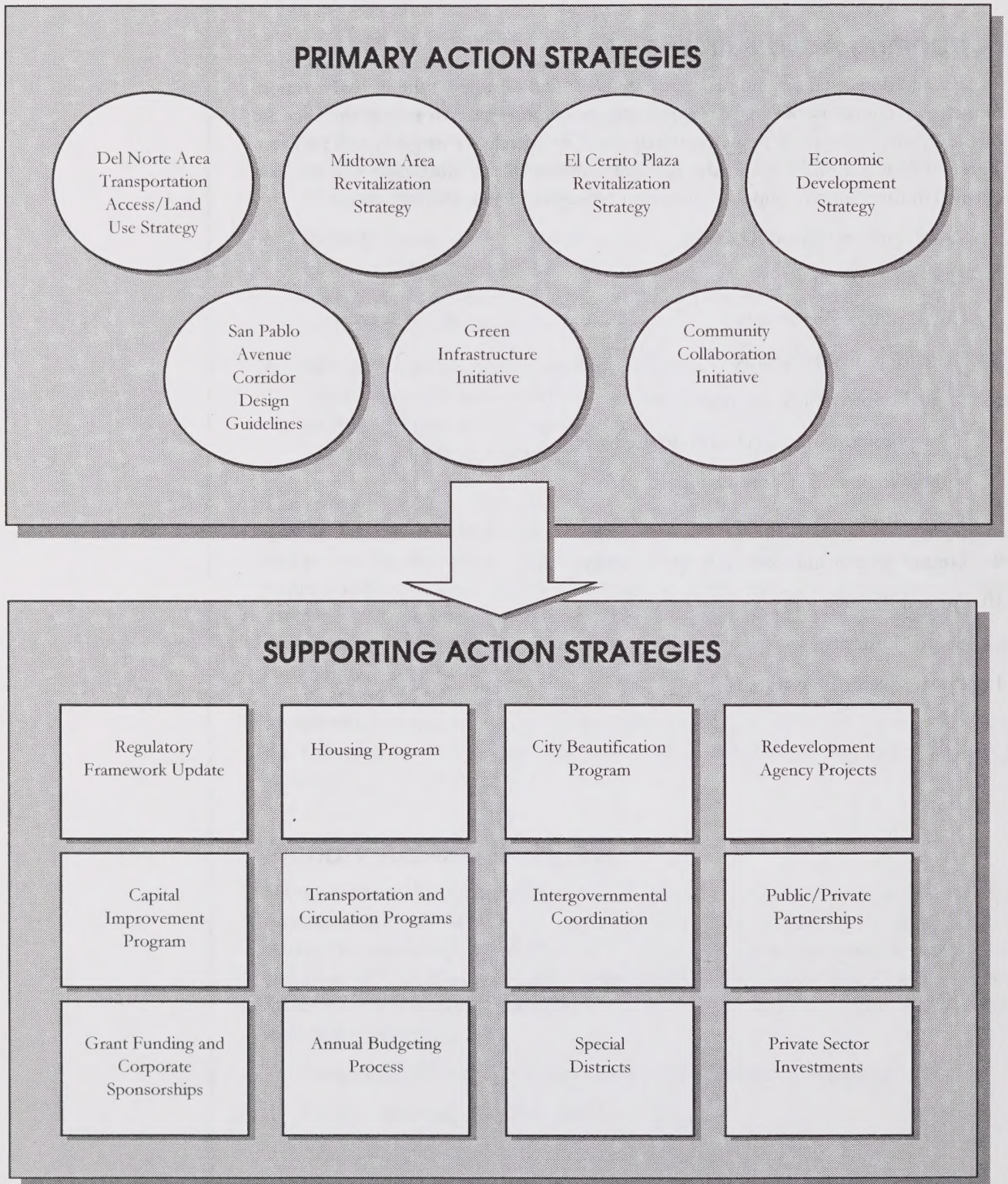
6. Create a Green Infrastructure Initiative
7. Create a Community Collaboration Initiative

Supporting Action Strategies

Twelve additional actions and programs are identified to support the Primary Action Strategies. These Supporting Action Strategies are necessary to ensure the success of the Primary Action Strategies and help the City to achieve its goals and policies. These actions are discussed in the relevant sections of this document and are not detailed in this chapter. Supporting Action Strategies include the following:

1. Regulatory Framework Update
2. Housing Programs
3. City Beautification Programs
4. Redevelopment Programs
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Transportation and Circulation Programs
7. Intergovernmental Coordination
8. Public/Private Partnerships
9. Grant Funding and Corporate Sponsorships
10. Annual Budgeting Process
11. Special Districts
12. Private Sector Investments

Figure 1 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN



C. Primary Action Strategies

1. *Del Norte Area Transportation Access/Land Use Strategy*

The Del Norte Area is a major regional transportation hub in the East Bay. El Cerrito plays host for regional commuters along the I-80 corridor by providing a major connection to the BART system and bus lines at the Del Norte station. HOV lanes provide direct access to the station, and a parking structure provides commuter parking. BART, buses, Interstate 80, and San Pablo Avenue all converge on this location and significantly impact local traffic, land uses, and the economic vitality of El Cerrito.

The regional role of the area is both a constraint and an opportunity for future development of properties surrounding the BART station and the I-80 interchange. This study will examine these constraints and opportunities to develop an overall strategy for the future development of the Del Norte BART Area. The study will investigate the market potential for alternative land uses and their potential for improving the City's fiscal well being, the area's attractiveness, and the quality of life for the community.

The transportation and land use strategy will include the following elements:

- **Multi-Modal Development Strategy**
 - Land Use Development Concept
 - Transportation and Circulation Concept
- **Site Development Concept**
 - Site Layout and Design
 - Building Design Concepts
 - Landscape Development Concept
- **Financing and Economic Development Strategy**
 - Financing
 - Regional Participation (MTC, BART, Caltrans)
 - Implementation Program and Phasing of Development Actions
- **Impact Analysis**
 - Traffic Impacts
 - Economic Impacts
 - Fiscal Impacts
 - Environmental Impacts

Responsible Organization: City El Cerrito

Participating Organizations: Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
City of Richmond
Contra Costa County
West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory
Committee (WCCTAC)
AC Transit

Time Frame: Near-Term (1-3 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
BART
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Contra Costa County
City of Richmond
Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

2. Midtown Area Revitalization Strategy

The Midtown Area of El Cerrito, extending from south of Moeser Lane to north of Manila Avenue, provides a unique opportunity for creating a major new activity hub in the City of El Cerrito for a mixed-use and commercial center with housing above ground floor retail stores. The Midtown Area also provides opportunities for a new civic center complex with a new city hall and the remodeled public safety building.

The existing area includes two large suburban shopping centers, a lumber mill, a temporary City Hall complex, and the public safety building. Because of changing retailing patterns, the existing land uses in the area potentially will undergo major changes in the coming years. A Midtown Revitalization Strategy that plans for the future of this area will position the City to take advantage of these anticipated changes to create a new mixed-use, pedestrian friendly center in the “heart” of El Cerrito.

The Midtown Area Revitalization Strategy will include:

- Land Use Concept
- Site Development and Layout Concept
- Transportation and Circulation Concept
- Building Design Concepts
- Landscape Development Concept
- Financing and Economic Development Strategy
- Implementation Action Program
- Analysis of Transportation, Economic, Fiscal, and Environmental Impacts to the Area

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito

Participating Organizations: Chamber of Commerce

Time Frame: Near-Term (1-3 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency
Midtown Business Association

3. *El Cerrito Plaza Revitalization Strategy*

The El Cerrito Plaza area is located at the southern City limits along San Pablo Avenue adjacent to the El Cerrito BART station. The site currently contains an aging shopping mall but, due to its prominent location along San Pablo Avenue and easy access to BART, the site has potential for additional development as a major activity hub of retail activity in El Cerrito.

Much of the existing plaza is underutilized with vacant stores surrounded by a large expanse of empty parking lots. The Plaza today is a remnant of an older, suburban style, community shopping center. Changing retail marketing practices and the Plaza's distance from the freeway has led to its current economic status.

Despite its current lack of success, the Plaza provides a major opportunity to improve the City's economic position. A process is currently underway to revitalize this area. The General Plan, however, should take a longer view of the opportunities and provide guidance for continued actions over the next 20 years and a vision beyond this period.

Through a major redesign of the area and a change in focus of retail activities in the Plaza, the area can provide a vital new economic resource for the community. An overall long-range revitalization strategy for the Plaza area will provide the framework for future improvement efforts to create a new active retail center in El Cerrito.

The El Cerrito Plaza Revitalization Strategy will address the El Cerrito Plaza site as well as adjacent blocks. The Land Use and Design Strategy will guide the physical development of the El Cerrito Plaza area. The Strategy will base its recommendations on studies of the market potential for alternative land uses in the El Cerrito Plaza area, fiscal impacts of these land uses, circulation and access, quality of life, and other relevant issues.

The Strategy will include four main elements:

- Land Use, Circulation and Design Elements
- Financing and Economic Development Strategy
- Implementation Program
- Analysis of Transportation, Economic, Fiscal, and Environmental Impacts

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito

Participating Organizations: AC Transit

Time Frame: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
 El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency
 El Cerrito Plaza Business Association
 BART
 Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)

4. *Economic Development Strategy*

The Economic Development Strategy will coordinate the City's efforts to retain and attract desirable businesses to El Cerrito, including retail and office uses. The Economic Development Strategy will be based on market studies and economic impact analyses of retail and office uses for the El Cerrito area, and will include strategies for:

- Fiscal Improvements and Stabilization;
- Business Development and Retention;
- Business Promotion and Marketing; and
- Optimum Synergy and Spatial Relationships among Businesses.

The Economic Development Strategy consists of two programs:

- The Business Development and Retention Strategy may include technical and financial assistance programs for new businesses, land assembly for sale to larger developers, and streamlined permitting for desirable developments.
- The Retail/Business Promotion and Marketing Program will coordinate the promotion of El Cerrito businesses to the community and region.

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito

Time Frame: Near-Term (1-3 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
City Business Associations
El Cerrito Chamber Of Commerce

5. San Pablo Avenue Corridor Design Guidelines

Retail and office uses along the San Pablo Avenue Corridor are the major economic engines in the City of El Cerrito. The success of the San Pablo Avenue Corridor supports the programs and services of the residential neighborhoods. Future revitalization of the San Pablo Avenue corridor requires that existing lots and buildings be designed and developed to their highest and best use, while preserving and enhancing the residential neighborhoods that adjoin them.

The San Pablo Avenue Corridor contains El Cerrito's main north-south arterial, with extensive commercial development based on automobile access. This development pattern is consistent with development along San Pablo Avenue as it continues through the neighboring communities of Richmond, Albany, and Berkeley. Design Guidelines for San Pablo Avenue will provide direction for the enhancement of existing business and the development of new business opportunities. These improvements will create an attractive and functional development pattern that meets today's retail and office needs.

The design guidelines will address mixed-use commercial development, high-density residential uses, public spaces, and streetscapes design. Residential area guidelines will address density, parking, pedestrian access, noise, and open space needs for new and rehab of existing residential areas. Mixed-use commercial area guidelines will address density and development intensity, parking, access (pedestrian and auto) and circulation, signage, open space and setback requirements, land use buffer areas, and building design and image characteristics.

Streetscape guidelines will recommend the use of landscaping, street furniture, and lighting to improve the experiences of both pedestrian and automobile users of San Pablo Avenue. The pedestrian experience can be further improved by creating public spaces such as plazas, courtyards, and street bulb-outs, and creating a stronger buffer between the sidewalk and automobile traffic. Streetscape design guidelines should include on and off street parking strategies, standards for pedestrian crossing and intersection design, sidewalk widths, street tree planting, signal timing and other functional issues such as ease of movement, pedestrian safety and security, and accessibility.

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito

Participating Organizations: Caltrans
San Pablo Avenue Business Association
West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory
Committee (WCCTAC)
AC Transit

Time Frame: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency
Caltrans

6. *Green Infrastructure Initiative*

The major amenities enjoyed by El Cerrito residents are the parks and open spaces provided in the City. These parks and open spaces need to be preserved and enhanced to maintain this major community resource that contributes so significantly to the City's "quality of life." The Green Infrastructure Initiative is intended to develop a range of improvement measures including the Ohlone Greenway, parks and recreation improvements and programs, creeks restoration projects, open space preservation, and new and revitalized cultural facilities.

The Ohlone Greenway provides a safe and contiguous path for commuters to reach BART stations and for residents to use as a walking, running, and bicycling trail. The Green Infrastructure Initiative will assess the condition of the Greenway and provide guidelines, development standards, and improvement projects to enhance the facility to serve its users better. These standards shall include adding lighting as needed for safety and security along the Greenway and creating a "green street" concept that encourages adjoining uses to create access points to active areas, yards, building entries, outdoor patios, and gardens, opening into the Greenway. Windows should overview the Greenway to increase visual surveillance ("eyes on the street") of the "green street" improving safety.

Parks and recreation programs provide opportunities for El Cerrito youth, singles, families, and seniors. The Initiative will assess the parks and recreation services and facilities available to El Cerrito residents and recommend improvements. El Cerrito is fortunate to possess an extensive open space system in the hillsides. The Green Initiative will identify improvements to the open space network such as ongoing maintenance programs, public trail access improvements, and scenic overlooks.

El Cerrito is blessed with a number of creeks and water drainage ways. The Green Initiative will assess the condition of the creeks and identify areas where they can be improved, restored, and used as both natural open space and a significant recreation resource. Restoring riparian vegetation along buffer areas will help protect against flooding and improve water quality by filtering urban runoff. Access points to the creeks provide education opportunities and additional recreation possibilities.

The Green Initiative should include standards, guidelines, and other improvement projects and beautification programs to protect parks and open spaces, including exploring opportunities for acquisition of additional parks and open space lands. It will include an analysis and improvement strategy for the following:

- Ohlone Greenway Improvements
- Creek Restoration
- Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programs
- Cultural Facilities
- Open Space Preservation
- Strategies for Long-term Maintenance

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito Parks and Recreation
Department

Participating Organizations: East Bay Regional Parks District
County Flood Control District
Contra Costa County
City of Albany
BART
El Cerrito Greenway Committee

Time Frame: Near-Term (1-3 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito
El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency

7. Community Collaboration Initiative

Continued participation and commitment by all segments of the community, both private and public, are required to successfully implement the City's goals and policies as outlined in the General Plan. Success will depend on collaboration between city departments, civic organizations, adjoining City agencies, and federal, state and regional agencies.

A community collaboration initiative will provide an ongoing information and team building approach to help create partnerships and alliances to build consensus on project priorities and strategies for improvement. The collaboration initiative includes a program of community capacity building, leadership development, and continuing education on City projects, goals, programs, and good citizenship.

Responsible Organization: City of El Cerrito

Participating Organizations: City Homeowners Associations
City Business Associations
Chamber of Commerce
City Civic Organizations

Time Frame: Near-Term (1-3 years)

Potential Funding Sources: City of El Cerrito

D. Supporting Action Strategies

1. **Regulatory Framework Update.** Amend zoning ordinance, design guidelines, and other regulations to reflect the intent of the General Plan and support the implementation of the action strategies presented in this chapter.
2. **Housing Programs.** Utilize federal and state programs to encourage homeownership, assist first time homebuyers, provide home improvement loans and grants, and ensure adequate provision of affordable housing. Provide incentives to encourage development of new housing in targeted areas, such as near BART stations.
3. **City Beautification Programs.** Implement city beautification programs such as street tree planting, public art, neighborhood cleanups, sign ordinance amendments, improved lighting, and graffiti prevention to make El Cerrito a more pleasant environment to live, work, and play.
4. **Redevelopment Programs.** The San Pablo corridor is designated as a redevelopment area under California State Law, enabling the use of tax increment financing to fund projects and programs within the area. Additionally, the process allows for partnerships with private developers to acquire land and invest in new projects in the area.
5. **Capital Improvement Program.** Incorporate infrastructure improvements, such as street, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting, in the City's Capital Improvement Program to ensure the allocation of funding to these projects.
6. **Transportation and Circulation Programs.** Utilize existing traffic and circulation programs such as federal and state funding for transportation improvements and Bay Area Air Quality Management District programs for travel demand management. El Cerrito should also coordinate plans and major proposed development activities with adjacent jurisdictions to ensure continuity of transportation services and facilities.
7. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** Numerous governmental bodies, such as Contra Costa County, neighboring cities, transportation agencies, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the Flood Control District play roles in the implementation of the General Plan. The City of El Cerrito should continue to communicate with these agencies on relevant issues, and participate in existing programs that could improve the quality of life in El Cerrito.
8. **Public/Private Partnerships.** Encourage public/private partnerships, which can combine advantages of both government and private industry to create projects that benefit the community – public sector support reduces uncertainty for private developers, and private sector investment reduces financial burden for the City.

9. **Grant Funding and Corporate Sponsorships.** Actively pursue grant funding from federal agencies, state agencies, and foundations, as well as corporate sponsorships for projects. For example, federal grant programs under TEA-21 can be used to create bicycle trails, support alternate transportation programs, and improve pedestrian safety. Local businesses should be encouraged to invest in their community by sponsoring public projects such as entryways, signage, and landmark features.
10. **Annual Budgeting Process.** Project future funding needs according to the Strategic Action Plan, and secure funding for priority action projects through the City's budgeting process.
11. **Special Districts.** Special assessment districts can be used to fund improvements that benefit a specific area. For example, business improvement districts (BID) can be used by retail areas to fund streetscape, parking, and other improvements that benefit the area. Special assessment districts are often funded through bonds paid for by tax increases to district property owners.
12. **Private Sector Investments.** Work with private developers to encourage the development of desirable new projects and land uses in El Cerrito.



Chapter 3 Planning Background

CHAPTER 3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

This chapter presents a summary of background information that may be useful in understanding the context of the goals and policies presented in subsequent chapters. The *1999 General Plan Existing Conditions Report*, prepared as part of the General Plan Update Program, provides more information on the topics covered in this chapter and includes a bibliography.

A. Historical Context

El Cerrito was incorporated in 1917, with a population of approximately 1,500 residents. Over the years, the City grew slowly but steadily, with rapid growth beginning during World War II and extending through the 1950s. As the City became more established, it gave itself the title “City of Homes,” reflecting its suburban residential character.



While there have been significant changes in El Cerrito over the years, the City's overall development pattern has remained relatively unchanged. The San Pablo Avenue Corridor remains the City's primary commercial district with the rest of the city largely dedicated to residential development and supporting uses, such as schools and parks.

El Cerrito's population peaked in the early 1960s, at approximately 25,400. Although the City has continued to develop, there has been a slight decline in the population since the 1960s, with an estimated 1998 population of 23,600. This decline has been due to limited land availability, demolition of some housing to make way for BART's development, and a declining average household size.

One of the most important factors in El Cerrito's history has been the strong tradition of citizen activism and involvement in city planning and decision making, dating back more than five decades. Citizen activism and coalition building resulted in the professionalization of City services in the 1940s; the construction of civic improvements in the 1950s; development and adoption of the City's first General Plan in 1967; and formation of the City's Redevelopment Agency in the 1970s.

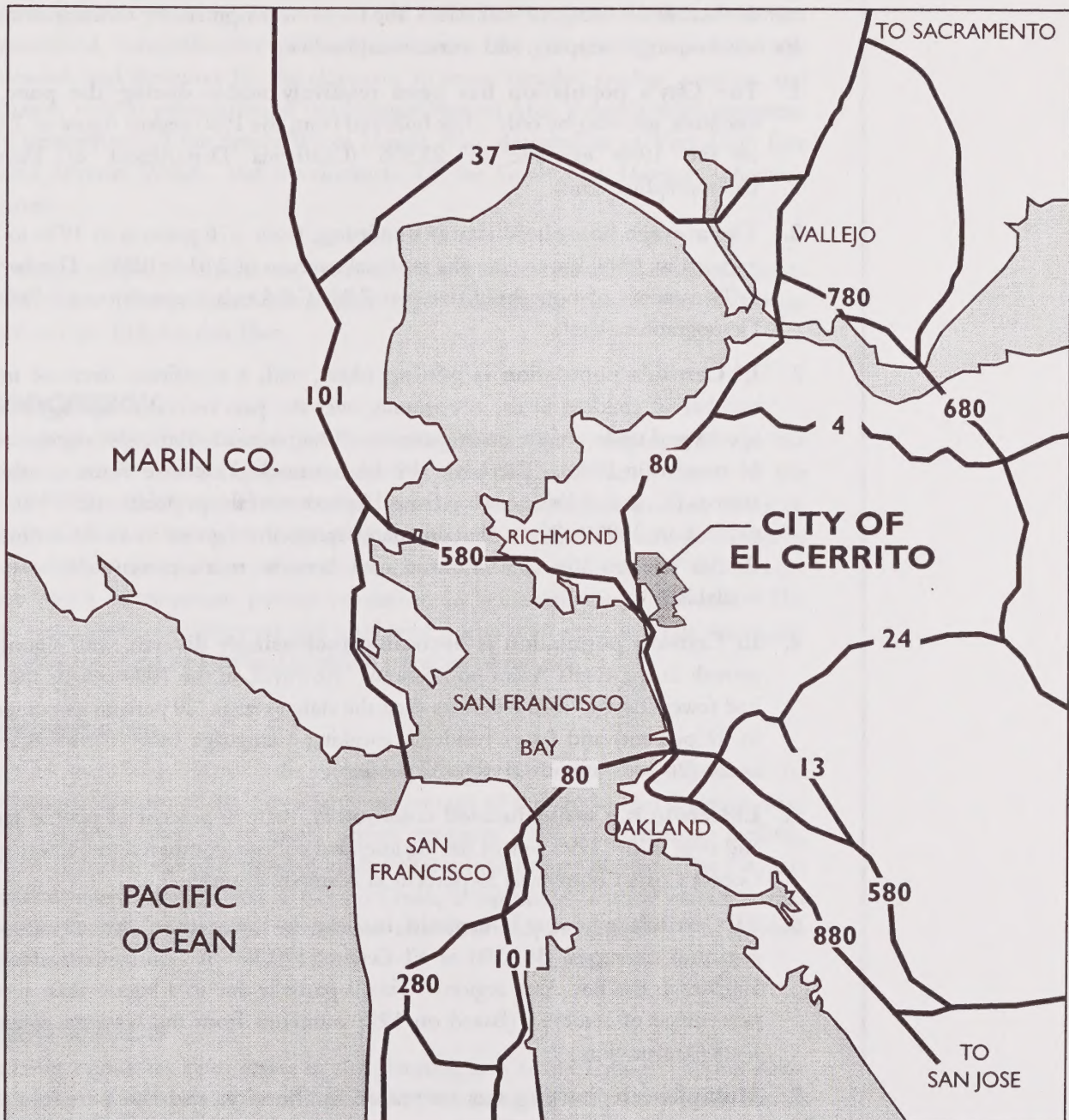
B. Regional Setting

El Cerrito is part of the San Francisco Bay Area—a dynamic urban complex of 7,000 square miles, nine counties, 100 cities, and a population of more than 6 million, making it the fifth most populous metropolitan area in the United States. El Cerrito is a centrally located Bay Area community in the “East Bay” sub-region composed of Alameda and Contra Costa counties (see Figure 2: Regional Location Map).

El Cerrito is in western Contra Costa County along the I-80 corridor. The City of Richmond lies to the west, north, and northeast of El Cerrito. The unincorporated Contra Costa County area of East Richmond Heights borders the north and northeastern parts of the city, and Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, owned and operated by the East Bay Regional Park District, lies to the east. The unincorporated Contra Costa County community of Kensington is to the southeast, and the City of Albany (in Alameda County) lies to the south, with Berkeley just beyond.

Several key points stand out in regard to El Cerrito's regional setting:

- **El Cerrito's future is closely tied to that of the entire San Francisco Bay Area** – a region with a robust economy; an increasingly diverse population; and one of the country's highest costs of living. Regardless of the level of growth within its city limits, El Cerrito will be greatly affected by regional trends and events. Many of the issues addressed by the General Plan (traffic, economic development, air pollution, etc.), while having important local dimensions, are truly regional in scope.
- **El Cerrito is blessed with a beautiful location and climate**, enhancing the quality of life for its residents.
- **El Cerrito is strategically located along major regional transportation routes**, including Interstate 80 and the Richmond line of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), providing important regional access for local businesses as well as residents.



Drawing prepared by MIG, Inc., 800 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA. 94710

Figure 2 REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

C. Community Profile

As El Cerrito enters the 21st Century, there are a number of current and projected trends that are affecting, or will affect, the City's development by creating demands for new housing, shopping, and recreational facilities.

1. **The City's population has been relatively stable during the past two decades**, growing by only a few hundred from the 1980 census figure of 22,731 to the 1998 estimate of 23,596 (California Department of Finance, Demographics Unit).
2. **The average household size is declining**, from 2.76 persons in 1970 to 2.29 persons in 1990, lower than the regional average of 2.61 in 1990. The January 1998 estimate of household size was 2.32 (California Department of Finance, Demographics Unit).
3. **El Cerrito's population is getting older**, with a significant decrease in the number of children in the community over the past several decades (children, age 18 and under, made up 36 percent of the population in 1960, decreasing to 16 percent in 1990). There has also been a marked increase in the number of seniors (55 and older), growing from 15 percent of the population in 1960 to 32 percent in 1990. (Note that in many cases, the figures in this Community Profile rely on the 1990 Census data because more current data are not available.)
4. **El Cerrito's population is becoming increasingly diverse**, with significant growth in the City's Asian populations. However, in the 1990 census the City had fewer foreign-born residents than the state average (20 percent as compared to 22 percent) and fewer residents speaking a language other than English at home (26 percent compared to 32 percent).
5. **El Cerrito is a well-educated community**, with 70 percent of people age 25 and over in the 1990 census having attended college (compared to 64 percent in Contra Costa County and 59 percent in Alameda County).
6. **El Cerrito's average household income is lower than the county and regional averages** (\$63,300 in El Cerrito; \$70,700 in Contra Costa County; \$66,900 in the Bay Area region). This is partially due to a higher than average percentage of seniors. (Based on 1995 estimates from the National Planning Data Corporation.)
7. **Multiple-unit housing has increased in the city, and the percentage of owner-occupied units has decreased**. Multiple-unit housing represented 19 percent of the City's housing stock in 1970 and 26 percent in 1997 (based on 1970 census data and January 1998 estimates from the California Department of Finance). Also, from 1970 to 1990, home ownership dropped from 70 percent of all units, to 66 percent (based on census data).

D. Environmental Setting

The General Plan establishes policies to protect the City's environmental resources from the impact of development, and to protect residents and businesses from potential hazards resulting from natural and man-made environmental hazards. As a generalized, comprehensive planning document, the General Plan provides the framework and direction for development of more detailed studies, policies, and programs, such as preparation of the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan; preparation of the Storm Water Master Plan, designation of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and development of the City's Fire Hazard Reduction Program.

Following are brief summaries of some of the key environmental factors and issues in El Cerrito. More detailed information is provided in the *General Plan Background Report* and the EIR for this Plan.

Topography

The topography of El Cerrito is characterized by a gently sloping plain in the western portion of the city (nearest the bay) and the west-facing slopes of the Berkeley Hills, which rise above the bay to an elevation of approximately 900 feet. The city is divided into two topographic regions: the lower elevations characterized by a traditional grid pattern of development and the higher elevations with steeper slopes and a development pattern prescribed by the contours of the land. The lower elevations cover the west and southwest portions of the city while the higher elevations cover the eastern and northern portions of the city.

Watersheds

There are eight major watersheds that drain through El Cerrito. As a result of the development history of the city, a large percentage of the creeks and drainage-ways in the city are located on or under private property. The open drainage facilities provide extremely valuable riparian habitat that is increasingly limited. The City has identified several creeks, such as Cerrito Creek, as significant natural resources that have the potential to become recreational amenities and, in some cases, to provide trail connections.

Open Space

The most significant open space in the planning area is the Hillside Natural Area, with additional open space areas provided by the Mira Vista Country Club, Sunset View Cemetery, Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp, eleven developed parks, the Ohlone Greenway, school playfields, and several "pocket parks." The city also borders the significant open space resources of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. Protection and management of the Hillside Natural Area and other open space areas, including continued implementation of the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan in coordination with fire hazard reduction programs, will continue to be an important concern of the community.

Rare and Endangered Species

Four “special status” species potentially inhabit the upper hillsides of El Cerrito: two plant species—Santa Cruz tarplant (*Holocarpha macradenia*) and San Francisco owl’s clover (*Orthocarpus floribundus*); and two animal species—Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and Alameda whipsnake (*Masticophis lateralis euryxanthus*).

Soils, Geology, and Seismicity

The Hayward Fault passes through El Cerrito, generally following the route of Arlington Boulevard. The city is also potentially subject to ground-shaking from a major earthquake on the San Andreas Fault, located about 18 miles away. According to earthquake predictions made in 1990 by the Working Group on California Earthquake Probability, there is roughly a one-in-four chance of a large earthquake (magnitude 7 or greater) occurring in the next 30 years (beginning in 1990) along the northern segment of the Hayward Fault and the same chance of such an earthquake on the peninsula segment of the San Andreas Fault. The Working Group will announce its new predictions for the Bay Area in October 1999. The area immediately adjacent to the Hayward Fault has been designated as a special study zone, which imposes some additional development restrictions.

From a geologic and geotechnical standpoint, the primary concerns in El Cerrito are (1) slope stability, (2) earthquake ground shaking, (3) fault ground rupture, and (4) liquefaction potential. According to the *Tri-Cities Seismic Safety Study* (Bishop 1973), virtually all of the upland areas of El Cerrito have a moderate to high landslide risk. The highest risk for groundshaking is in the flatter areas, which have shallow alluvium. The greatest risk of ground rupture is along the fault trace. Several small areas along Baxter and Cerrito creeks are identified as having a high liquefaction potential.

Fire Hazards

El Cerrito’s intermix of urban housing and wildland areas increases the community’s risk of loss from a devastating fire. The City’s Fire Hazard Reduction Program addresses hazard reduction in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones of the city, requiring that property owners take special precautions with their properties, including vegetation management, to reduce the risk of fire.

Areas Prone to Flooding

A number of large storms have caused drainage problems and flooding in the past in El Cerrito. Recent completion of the first phase in the City’s storm drain master plan program has addressed the highest priority sites and significantly reduced localized flooding issues in the city. During the past year of heavy rains (1997-98), only three sites had drainage-related flooding problems. The only portion of El Cerrito located in a FEMA Flood Insurance Zone is the area located west of San Pablo Avenue and south of Central Avenue. Flooding is generally caused by the relatively low ground elevations and high tides in this area, coupled with hydraulic restrictions in the existing downstream channels located in Richmond between El Cerrito and San Francisco Bay.

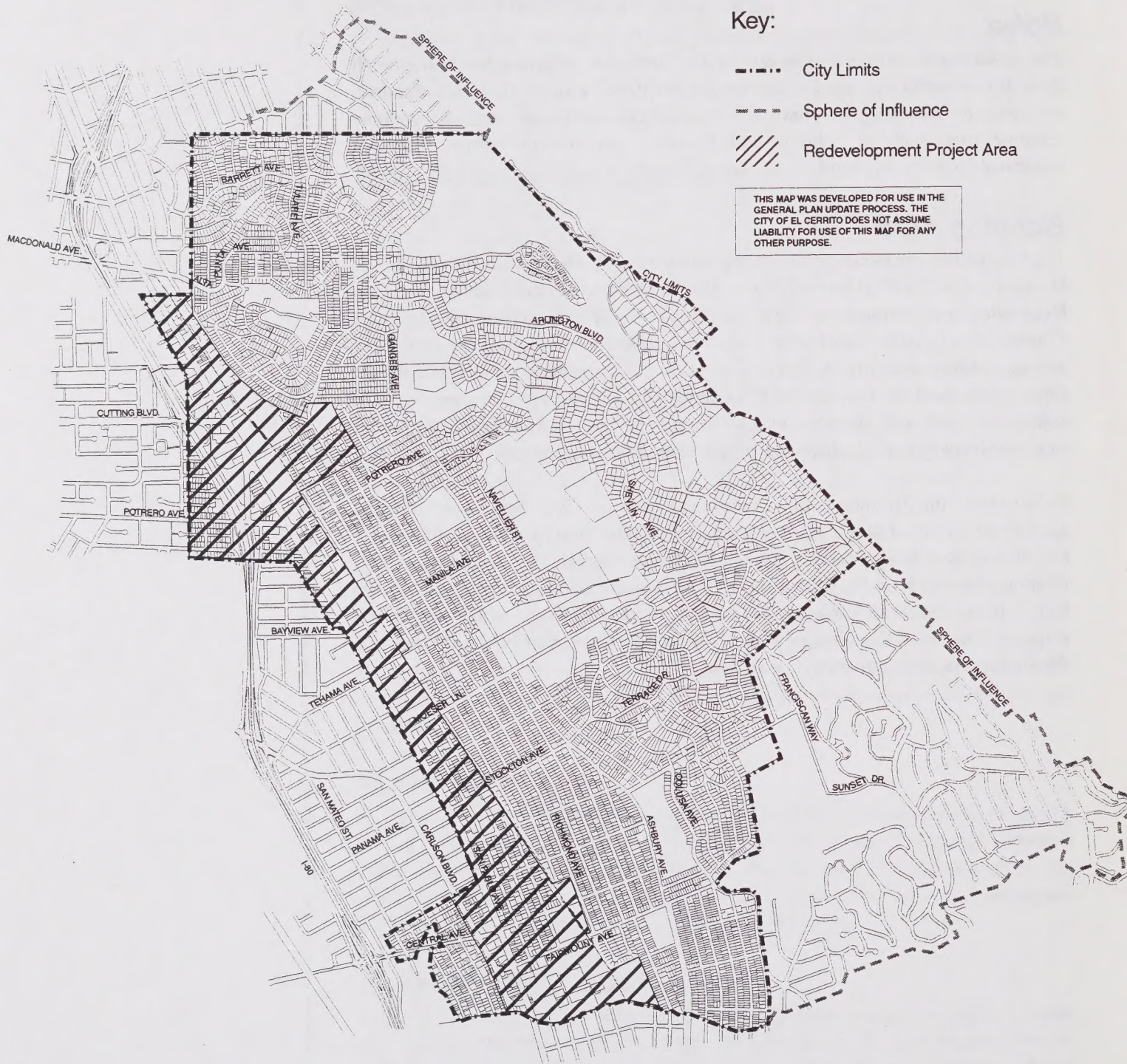
Noise

The major noise sources in the City of El Cerrito are vehicular traffic (especially along Interstate 80 and San Pablo Avenue) and BART trains. These noise sources are generally annoying, but have the most significant impact on nearby noise-sensitive uses such as schools and libraries, convalescent homes, churches, residential facilities, and outdoor recreation areas.

Planning Area

The City of El Cerrito encompasses approximately 2,390 acres within its city limits. However, the City's Planning Area also includes the neighboring areas of Kensington and portions of East Richmond Heights, both in unincorporated Contra Costa County. See Figure 3 for a map showing the boundaries of the city and its planning area. In these areas, the County in formal consultation with the City controls land use issues. The General Plan, in accordance with State law, must address land uses and other planning issues in these areas, particularly as they relate to and potentially impact adjacent uses and activities within the city.

In El Cerrito, the Planning Area is coterminous with the City's Sphere of Influence, as defined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). While the inclusion of Kensington and portions of East Richmond Heights within the Sphere of Influence indicates that these areas may eventually be annexed or served by the City, it is not expected that the status of either area will change within the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan. It should be noted that El Cerrito provides fire services, under contract, to Kensington.



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Figure 3 PLANNING BOUNDARIES

E. Economic and Fiscal Conditions

Like many cities in California, the City of El Cerrito has been experiencing financial difficulties, most of which are beyond the control of the City. These financial difficulties are mainly due to a declining revenue base that has several causes: the State government's shifting of a portion of the local share of property tax revenues to the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF); the recession in the early 1990s; and the 1996 loss of the Emporium store, one of the City's largest sales tax revenue generators.

As in many other cities, these difficulties have created new challenges for El Cerrito as it strives to balance its General Fund operating budget (the City has adopted a two-year budget cycle), requiring reductions in many City programs and services. They also create challenges for the General Plan as it charts a course for the City's development and related activities in the coming 20 years. While the City has launched separate efforts to address long-term budget and public service issues (e.g., *Project Listen*, *Neighbor to Neighbor*, and the *Services for the 21st Century Program*), the General Plan will influence projected fiscal conditions in several ways. First, it will affect the supply of available funds by influencing the type of development from which the City receives sales and property tax revenues. Second, it will affect the demand for these funds by establishing levels and priorities for City services and facilities.

Typically the Redevelopment Agency is used to assemble small parcels that would otherwise be uneconomic to develop. It can also be used to provide amenities to the community that the private sector is not willing to provide. The process should strive to be as cost-effective as possible and have community support. A project that is highly cost-effective may override neutral support by the community, while a project that has very strong community support may override minimal cost-effectiveness.

Economic Development

The General Plan includes land use policies that enhance and encourage economic development to assist the City in generating additional property and sales taxes and other revenues. Specifically, it supports City efforts to aggressively pursue the redevelopment and revitalization of core commercial areas, including El Cerrito Plaza, the Del Norte BART station area, and the retail strip along all or portions of San Pablo Avenue.

Public Service Standards

The General Plan establishes service standards for major municipal services, including police, fire, and parks and recreation. Each adopted service standard implies a certain commitment of City resources to maintain those standards. The projected costs of maintaining adopted service standards will need to be covered either from existing General Fund revenue sources or from new voter-approved revenue sources. The desired level of service standards and their affordability will directly affect the long-term fiscal condition of the City.

Implementation Priorities

The General Plan establishes policies that will guide the City's development over the next 20 years. To ensure that the Plan is an effective tool, it sets forth consistent, coherent policies and establishes consistent priorities for the City (as set forth in the Implementation Priorities in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 8, Implementation Summary).

F. Projections and Planning Assumptions

Projected Population Growth

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), a voluntary association of Cities and Counties in the San Francisco Bay Area, projects modest population growth in El Cerrito in the coming 20 years, with growth rates well below the county and regional averages. This is primarily because the city is already largely built out. By 2020, it is projected that the population in the City's planning area (including Kensington and a portion of East Richmond Heights) will have reached 31,900—an increase of 2,400 from the 1995 estimate of 29,500, and an average annual growth rate of less than a third of one percent (ABAG, *Projections 98*).

Projected Population Change in El Cerrito, 1995-2020

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	Growth Increment 1995-2020	Annual Rate of Change 1995-2020
El Cerrito ¹	29,500	30,000	30,600	31,100	31,500	31,900	2,400	0.31%

Note: (1) Includes Kensington and a portion of East Richmond Heights

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, December 1997; Economic and Planning Systems, Inc.

Projected Income and Employment Growth

The economic health and prosperity of El Cerrito and its residents have been, and will continue to be, integrally linked to other communities in the Bay Area. While population and job growth in the next 20 years will shift to outlying areas such as Solano, Marin, and Napa Counties, inner Bay Area communities that choose to accept growth will remain well-positioned to take advantage of the region's continued economic prosperity.

While El Cerrito has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the near East Bay (due in part to its higher proportion of retired residents), most El Cerritans travel outside of El Cerrito for work. This will continue to be the case in the next 20 years, with the majority of jobs located in other East Bay cities and in San Francisco.

Most of the jobs located in El Cerrito are in the retail and service sectors, with the City's top employers being retail stores with national names. While the number of

jobs in El Cerrito is projected to increase at a lower rate than in past years, it will slightly outpace growth in the number of employed residents. The service sector is expected to continue as the City's largest employment sector, and will lead job growth in the city through the year 2020. (ABAG, *Projections 98*)

El Cerrito's average household income is projected to grow moderately in the coming 20 years, but at a slower-than-average rate when compared with other communities in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. (ABAG, *Projections 98*)

Projected Housing Needs

Based on current trends, ABAG has projected a demand for a total of 1,110 new housing units in the El Cerrito planning area (includes Kensington and a portion of East Richmond Heights) by the year 2020. (ABAG, *Projections 98*) If the housing tenure characteristics that have historically existed in El Cerrito continue into the future, owner-occupied housing (single-family, condominiums, and cooperatives) will account for an estimated 666 units, while rental housing will account for 444 units. The supply of available land, however, especially for single-family homes, may not be able to provide this mix of housing.

Also, because El Cerrito is located in one of the most expensive housing markets in the country, housing affordability is a constant issue. Although homes in El Cerrito are less expensive than in some nearby cities, it has lower mean household incomes than do either Contra Costa or Alameda counties as a whole. If home values were to escalate sharply, many people who can now afford to live in El Cerrito would need to look elsewhere.

Projected Commercial Development Trends

Retail sales in El Cerrito declined gradually between 1990 and 1996 despite an increase in the number of stores. This likely reflects the closure of several large establishments and the rise of smaller independent stores in the older strip centers. With large retail spaces such as the Emporium, Woolworth, and Food Bowl stores lying vacant, the overall retail vacancy is estimated to be about 9 percent.

A great deal of residents' spending appears to be bypassing El Cerrito stores in favor of retail centers in other cities. About half the estimated spending potential of El Cerrito residents is not being captured by El Cerrito retailers. In particular, apparel, leisure, and specialty retail appear to be underrepresented in El Cerrito relative to the spending potential of residents.

Nonetheless, the retail picture in El Cerrito appears to be improving. While older strip centers and the El Cerrito Plaza are struggling against competition from newer centers, the north end of town has experienced a great deal of development activity oriented toward the freeway interchange and Del Norte BART station.

El Cerrito's office market is relatively undeveloped, despite its favorable location, good freeway access, and BART service. This is partly due to the City's reputation as a "bedroom community" and competition from what is seen as a more

entrepreneurial atmosphere in nearby West Berkeley and Emeryville, where office markets are currently expanding.

Assumptions Regarding Future Development

Increasing the revenues to the City, especially from sales tax, is a very high priority. However, while the demand for both commercial and residential land uses is expected to remain strong, the limited supply of available land is a major constraint.

Residential development will largely be limited to intensification and improvements on existing parcels. Multi-family housing, if appropriately designed and marketed, could prove successful in some areas along and near San Pablo Avenue. Most new retail development is expected to occur along the San Pablo Corridor within the Redevelopment Project Area. Larger office developments, if they occur, will likely be located in proximity to one or both of El Cerrito's two BART stations.

Future growth is expected to be limited to small in-fill opportunities and reuse of existing sites, mostly in the area along the San Pablo Corridor. Such projects tend to be more complex and less profitable to implement, and thus less attractive to developers. To attract development that is consistent with the City's vision for the San Pablo Corridor, the City may need to take a proactive role in the development process.

However, many City residents have significant concerns about the impact of various types of development, particularly on traffic and the economic health of the City. Development efforts will need to respond to these concerns and show that economic growth need not be inconsistent with, and in fact may be necessary for, improving the residential character of the City and making it a more rewarding place to live.



Chapter 4 Community Development and Design

CHAPTER 4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

The Community Development and Design Chapter is extremely important because it, together with the Transportation and Circulation Chapter, provides the foundation for growth on which the other chapters are based. This chapter includes the state-mandated land use and housing elements, as well as the county-required Growth Management Element. Community design, not a required topic, is also included because of the importance the residents of El Cerrito place on improving the quality of development.

This chapter is divided into the following subsections:

- Land Use
- Community Design
- Housing
- Growth Management

LAND USE

Land use goals and policies establish the overall type and location of activities, while the community design goals and policies establish the “quality” of those places that contain or facilitate the activities. Land use is also closely related to housing and growth management because both have spatial implications.

A. Setting

Uses of Land

The land area within the city limits of El Cerrito is approximately 2,386 acres or about 3.7 square miles, including vacant land and rights-of-way. Of this total, 1,193 acres are in residential uses. The city has approximately 8,537 tax assessor’s parcels.

Residential

El Cerrito has a predominantly residential pattern of land use. Multiple family dwellings are concentrated along both sides of the BART right-of-way and west of San Pablo Avenue near Central Avenue. Elsewhere, single-family homes spread eastward into the hills and westward beyond I-80 into a small area on either side of Potrero Avenue. Within these residential neighborhoods are support facilities such as schools, parks, recreation facilities, and open space.

Almost 50 percent of the land area, or 1,193 acres, of El Cerrito is used for residential purposes. Of this total, 1,098 acres are occupied by single-family houses; 25 acres by duplexes, 69 acres by multifamily units, and 1 acre by hotels, motels, group housing, and trailer park units. The significant residential activity since the

*See Table 4-1 for a summary of
land use acreages.*

last general plan has been continued infill of single-family lots and major apartment development such as Del Norte Place, Civic Plaza, and El Cerrito Royale.



Commercial

Approximately 5 percent of the land area, or 113 acres, of El Cerrito is used for commercial purposes. Of this, 84 acres are used for retail, residential, and entertainment purposes, 8 acres for offices, 13 acres for auto services and sales, and 8 acres for wholesale and manufacturing purposes. Some significant changes that have recently taken place include the new Target store, Del Norte Marketplace, and conversion of some automobile-oriented uses to retail uses.

Commercial development is almost exclusively concentrated along the San Pablo Avenue corridor with the greatest concentrations at the El Cerrito Plaza, the intersection of San Pablo and Moeser, and the Del Norte area. Region-serving retail facilities (Home Depot, Target, and Honda) are primarily located in the northern part of the corridor and at El Cerrito Plaza (although much less region-serving since the departure of the Emporium) along the city's southern boundary. Two neighborhood commercial centers are located on Fairmount Avenue between Colusa and Ramona and on Stockton between Ashbury and Everett.

Commercial office uses are located in the commercial corridor along San Pablo Avenue, in and adjacent to El Cerrito Plaza, and in the two neighborhood commercial areas (primarily in the Stockton-Norvell neighborhood, which contains several medical offices).

As noted above, the commercial land-use category also includes automobile and industrial uses. These include several automotive-related uses along San Pablo

Avenue, a lumber mill on Schmidt Lane, and a sheet metal processing plant on Kearney Street near Madison.

Institutional

Institutional uses consume 113 acres, or approximately 5 percent of the land area, of El Cerrito. Of this total, school and childcare facilities account for 47 acres, government and utilities for 46 acres, and other institutions for 20 acres. In recent years the only significant change has been the conversion of a portion of the Madera School site to residential uses. Chapter 6 provides a more complete description of institutional uses.

Recreational/Open Space

Approximately 16 percent of the land area, or 382 acres, of El Cerrito is used for recreational and open space purposes. Of this total, 181 acres are in public parks or recreational facilities, 33 acres in utility-owned open space, and approximately 168 acres in private recreational facilities or open space. Open space areas are located throughout the city. Major areas within the city include the Mira Vista Country Club in the northeastern portion of the city, the Hillside Natural Area located near the center of the city, and several parks and playgrounds at schools (see Chapter 6).

See Chapter 6 for a discussion of open space issues.



Vacant Land

As noted above, vacant land accounts for 124 acres, or approximately 5 percent of the land area, in El Cerrito. This low inventory of vacant land reflects the city's maturity as it approaches build-out. This amount of developable vacant land has decreased in recent years due to the gradual infill of scattered sites.

See Chapter 7 for a discussion of noise issues.

Compatibility Issues

El Cerrito is fortunate in that the number of land-use compatibility issues is relatively limited. There are noise compatibility issues in the western part of the city, caused primarily by traffic on I-80 and by the BART system. (Although I-80 and BART noise can be nuisance in other parts of the city, the area where significant effects have been measured is limited to location generally west of Richmond Street.) There are also some fire-related compatibility issues in the eastern part of the city due to potential fire hazards in natural areas near residential neighborhoods.

There are land-use compatibility issues, perhaps more potential than current, along the San Pablo Avenue corridor. Parking, noise, and scale of development (both recent and proposed) in this area have been raised as concerns by some residents. Some incompatibility exists, not so much because the actual uses are incompatible, but because of wide differences in building condition and maintenance. Also, vacant lots next to developed lots can be considered a compatibility problem because vacant lots are sometimes poorly maintained and because they can cause pedestrians to feel concerned about safety, especially at night.

Economic Development Activities

In 1999, the City began structuring a new economic development program which aims to retain and attract business and other activities, with the particular objective of improving the City's fiscal well being.

El Cerrito has a Redevelopment Agency, which was created in 1974. As of July 1, 1999, the City placed the Redevelopment Agency in an inactive status. The Agency remains a legal entity, however, and the City may find occasion in the future to activate the Authority of the Agency in support of broad economic development strategies.

After years of relatively few developments and several significant setbacks, there are many signs of renewed developer interest and economic strength that hold promise for El Cerrito. Projects recently completed or under construction are transforming the areas around the Del Norte BART station. The potential to revitalize and transform the El Cerrito Plaza BART station site and the adjacent shopping center continues to attract the interest of developers. The next ten years may be critical in the transformation of the San Pablo Corridor into a vital center (or sequence of centers) for the city – a development that is critical for the city's long-term financial health.

By law, the Redevelopment Agency must address affordable housing needs through its redevelopment activities. While residential uses may be incorporated into new redevelopment projects near the BART stations (to support businesses as well as transit use), the manner in which such housing is to be incorporated in these projects—if at all—is a subject of considerable community debate.

B. Trends

Due to the largely “built-out” nature of the city, its existing development pattern will remain largely unchanged in the 20-year planning period. The city is characterized by single-family homes in most areas, with commercial uses and higher density housing clustered along the San Pablo Corridor and in the vicinity of the two BART stations. Although the overall pattern is not expected to change, some replacement of and changes in individual businesses will take place.

In most cases, issues of development compatibility can be ameliorated on a site-by-site basis through good design and site planning. Building and site design standards, and a City design and development review process will ensure proper setbacks, heights, building massing, scale, and style of new development. In addition, design guidelines should be adopted in order to provide continuity of judgement in the development review process, as changes take place over time among staff and members of the Planning Commission and Design Review Board.

Growth Strategy

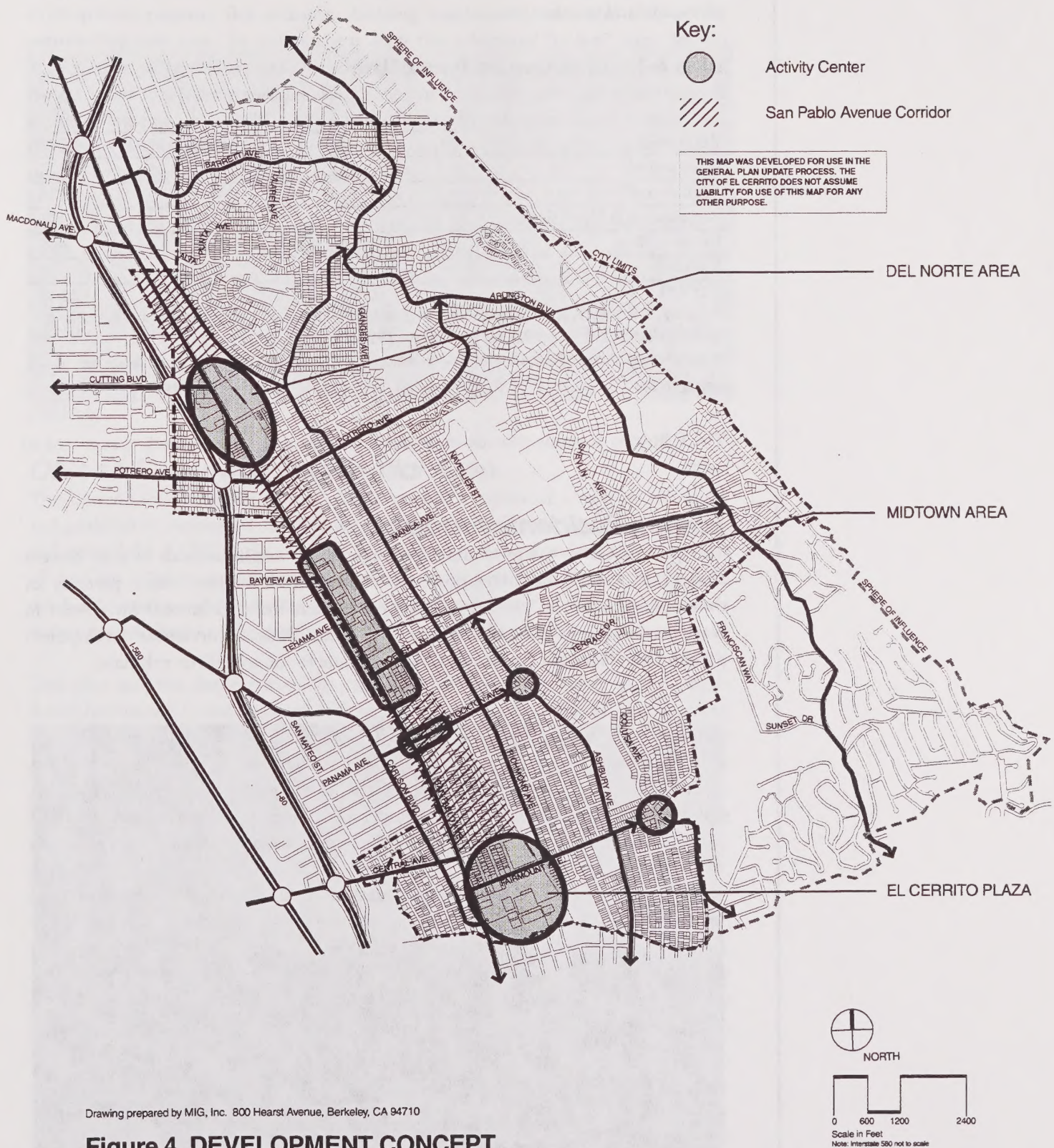
This General Plan calls for a balanced growth strategy with emphasis on retail and office uses. The Plan assumes that all commercial growth and most residential growth will take place within the San Pablo Avenue corridor. Specifically, the Plan assumes 189,350 square feet of additional retail space, 166,570 square feet of additional office space, and 775 new housing units. Of these totals, the only development assumed to be someplace other than the San Pablo Avenue corridor are 90 housing units, which represent a combination of accessory units and infill of vacant lots.



It should be noted that new retail and office space will actually be more than as indicated above because some existing retail and office space will be replaced by new development. No replacement of residential units is assumed, although some may occur.

The balanced growth strategy calls for most of the growth to take place in three areas along San Pablo in order to take advantage of the two BART stations and a large area between the stations that offers an opportunity for a large-scale mixed-use concept. These focal points—Del Norte BART Station Area, Midtown Area, and El Cerrito Plaza Area—are shown on Figure 4, Development Concept.





The land area breakdown in 1975, 1998, and 2020 (projected) is shown in Table 4-1. The only significant change between 1998 and 2020 is the conversion of 124 acres of vacant land to other uses.

Table 4-1: Land Area by Type of Use

	Land Uses (acres)		
	1975	1998	2020
Residential	1,112	1,193	1,295
Commercial	105	113	120
Institutional*	185	113	115
Recreational & Open Space*	320	382	391
Rights of Way	456	461	465
Vacant	159	124	0
TOTAL	2,337	2,386	2,386

* The 1975 acreage figures for Institutional uses and Recreational & Open Space uses are based on a different classification system than is used for the 1998 and 2020 figures.

Actual changes since 1975 are minimal when institutional, recreational and open space areas are aggregated.

The following sections provide more detail on how and where growth is expected to occur.

Eastern Residential Area

This plan preserves the predominantly single-family neighborhoods in their current land uses. These neighborhoods are characterized by two major patterns of development: first, a “historic grid” street pattern from Richmond Street east to Navellier Street and Colusa Avenue, and second, a hillside curvilinear development pattern from Navellier Street and Colusa Avenue to the top of the ridgeline.



The plan assumes that over the next twenty years the vacant lots in the residential areas will be infilled with new single family homes consistent with the density and development patterns (lot setbacks, building heights, lot coverage, etc.) of the surrounding land uses. In addition, it is likely that additional “in-law” units (known in El Cerrito as “accessory units”) will be constructed on existing single-family lots. Accessory units consist of small studios or one-bedroom apartments built within existing single-family houses or in small cottages in rear yard areas. These units often provide residences for family members, but may also be rented to non-family occupants, under El Cerrito’s regulations.

New single-family homes will add to the value of surrounding property by creating newer, larger homes. Family activity patterns in the new homes (auto trips, night and day use, size of families, etc.) will be similar to surrounding families and present no significant conflicts. Infill of vacant lots will help reduce potential vandalism, loitering, and the cleanliness of the area. New homes may also reduce potential for grass fires on vacant lots, improve safety and security of the neighborhoods, and generally improve the quality of life for neighborhoods with new families and children.

Ohlone Greenway Residential Area

The Ohlone Greenway Residential Area currently consists of a mixture of single- and multifamily residential development extending west from Richmond Street in and around the BART tracks to Kearney Street in the central and southern portions of the City. Higher intensity development generally occurs on the blocks closer to the BART tracks and San Pablo Avenue. A preponderance of single-family homes occurs on the blocks to the east from Liberty Street to Richmond Avenue.

This plan assumes that some of the existing older apartment buildings and single-family homes will be redeveloped with higher-density residential uses. In particular, older buildings in poor condition closer to San Pablo Avenue are the most likely candidates for replacement. Older “stucco box” apartment buildings will be replaced with more up-to-date and better quality apartments and condominiums. Higher-density apartments and condominiums will most likely replace some older single-family buildings, currently surrounded by apartments.

New buildings will be designed to meet contemporary development standards (setbacks, open space and yards, building heights, onsite parking spaces, etc.) and are expected to be of higher-quality design than current structures in the area. Building ornamentation and landscaping should be sufficiently detailed as to make the property attractive from the sidewalk as well as the street. Building design should maintain the visual rhythm of the street edge, avoiding abrupt changes in scale and setbacks except where the presence of important public buildings (e.g., churches, civic buildings, new library) would warrant.

A major concern of the residential land use pattern in the Ohlone Greenway Residential Area is high levels of noise due to proximity of the BART tracks and San Pablo Avenue. New construction standards and development requirements are

expected to mitigate interior noise levels by incorporating required sound barriers such as double-paned windows, wall insulation, and building orientation. However, noise from BART and traffic on San Pablo Avenue will affect users of yards and patios.

New, higher intensity residential development will be compatible with surrounding residential uses in those blocks west of Liberty Street, where existing multifamily buildings presently exist. Land uses east of Liberty Street are generally single-family homes, and the Plan assumes that the design, style, and type of residential construction of any new development in the area will be similar to established development.

Del Norte BART Station Area

The Del Norte BART station area consists of the commercial areas along San Pablo Avenue adjacent to the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station north of Potrero Avenue and west of Key Boulevard. Currently this area consists of predominantly lower-intensity commercial uses, including “big box” retail establishments, fast-food restaurants, car sales, and two motels. The area contains the new mixed-use Del Norte Place development, which includes high-density residential units, built above ground-floor retail uses. A number of lots and buildings in the area are currently vacant or underutilized. It is assumed that over the next 20 years, these lots will be developed with a higher-intensity use.

This plan assumes the development of current vacant and underused lots with a mix of residential units and offices with ground-floor commercial uses. It also assumes that new development will consist of mixed-use buildings on lots adjacent to San Pablo Avenue. Lower-density housing (townhouses, maximum three-story walk-ups) may replace a portion of the BART parking lots along Key Boulevard. The plan assumes that the retail uses will provide restaurants and services to both offices and residents, as well as to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Noise impacts to interior spaces from San Pablo and the BART tracks will be mitigated with double-paned windows and appropriate sound insulation. The mixed-use development will provide a more transit oriented development pattern and create a more pedestrian friendly environment. The greater mix of uses will also help support the retail activity in the area. This scenario will help reduce overall auto use and encourage transit use.

El Cerrito Plaza Area

The El Cerrito Plaza area consists of El Cerrito Plaza, El Cerrito Plaza BART property, and the area along both sides of San Pablo Avenue to just north of Central Avenue. The existing land uses include an underused and outdated community shopping center and BART parking lots. The existing shopping center layout and design sets retail stores back from San Pablo Avenue within a large surface parking lot. Some of the existing stores are vacant, the most notable vacancy being the one large department store at the Plaza, the former Emporium building.

This General Plan encourages the development of a more balanced, mixed-use development at the Plaza and the surrounding area. Both retail and office uses will be encouraged in this area, most likely with retail on the ground floor. The plan does not preclude housing uses as part of a mix of uses in this area. This overall approach is compatible with surrounding land uses in the area. A mixed-use development pattern will support use of the BART transit system and reduce reliance on auto trips by local residents. The many different users will contribute to a lively and active street life during weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

San Pablo Avenue Between the Del Norte BART Station Area and El Cerrito Plaza Area

The area between the two BART station areas contains a mix of land uses including housing, office, retail, and more traditional industrial uses (lumberyard and a sheet metal plant). The development pattern is varied and includes auto-oriented “strip development,” several mixed-use office/retail centers, and limited housing. Many of the lots are small with retail stores that lack adequate onsite parking. Some of the older retail store buildings are in very poor condition or vacant. Much of the area on the west side of San Pablo Avenue is within the Richmond city limits.



This plan assumes a mix of retail, office, and housing uses along San Pablo Avenue. This mix will include new retail, housing, and mixed-use developments (housing with ground-floor retail uses). The commercial development pattern will accommodate a range of retail types and services, including additional “big-box” uses (to the extent adequate sites can be assembled) as well as community and neighborhood uses.

Opportunities also exist for creating a more intense mixed-use development pattern at the major cross-streets (Fairmount Avenue, Stockton Avenue, Moeser Lane, and Manila Avenue). In particular, the “Midtown” area, extending from south of Moeser Lane to north of Manila Avenue, provides a significant re-use opportunity as obsolete buildings are vacated and either rehabilitated or replaced. The range and variety of activity will create the most variation in activity during the day, night, and weekends. Auto traffic and pedestrian movements will be more balanced throughout the day and week. Noise levels from the street will be mitigated with construction and design techniques.

Residential Areas West of San Pablo Avenue

This plan assumes that the two residential neighborhoods west of San Pablo Avenue will have no major land use changes. West El Cerrito (the neighborhood west of Highway 80) will be maintained as a predominantly single-family residential neighborhood. A few individual single-family homes may be constructed on vacant lots in the area. All new homes will be compatible with the neighborhood.

In the area near Central Avenue, this plan will allow for a small increase in residential units over time as older single-family houses are replaced by new multifamily structures (duplex, three- and four-unit apartments, condos, and townhouses). All new development will conform to local development standards and design and development review requirements. In most cases, the plan assumes that new construction will be better designed, providing for more amenities than the structures being replaced.

C. Land Use Categories

The general type and location of land uses in the City of El Cerrito for the next 20 years are shown in Figure 5, Land Use and Circulation. Definitions for each land use type or category are provided below. The allowable densities and intensities of development for all land use categories are described in the final section before the Goals and Policies. The Land Use and Circulation map will be amended in the event that the City makes changes to the designations of any land areas, or the routes or classifications of circulation facilities.

EL CERRITO GENERAL PLAN

Figure 5

LAND USE & CIRCULATION

Residential Land Use

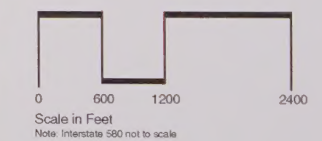
-  **Very Low Density**
(up to 6 units per net acre)
-  **Low Density**
(up to 9 units per acre)
-  **Medium Density**
(up to 20 units per acre)
-  **High Density**
(up to 35 units per acre)

Other Land Use

-  **Comercial/Mixed Use**
-  **Parks & Open Space**
-  **Institutional & Utility**

Circulation

-  **Collector Street**
-  **Minor Arterial**
-  **Major Arterial**
-  **Interstate Highway**
-  **BART**

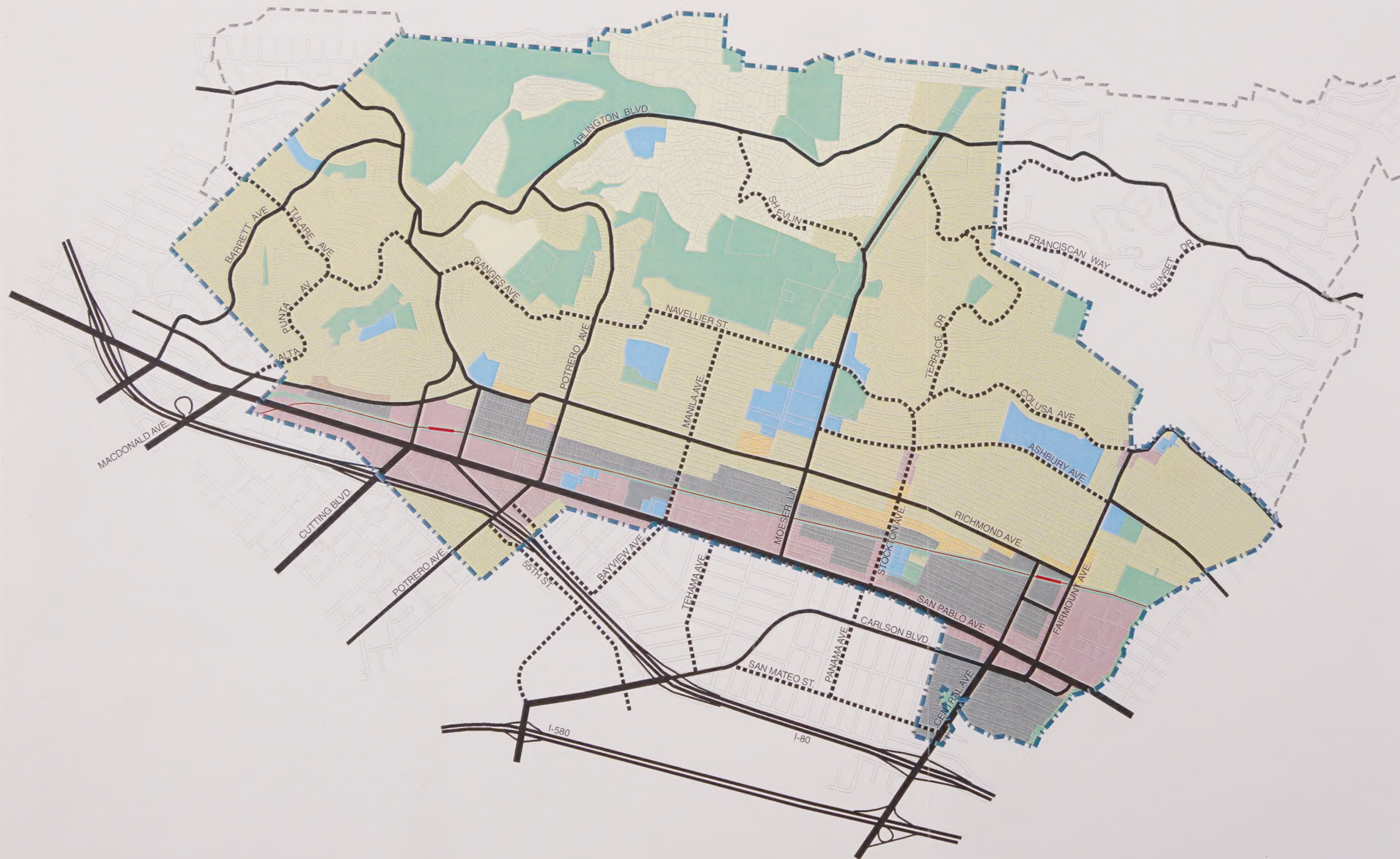


Prepared for:
City of El Cerrito

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THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS. THE CITY OF EL CERRITO DOES NOT ASSUME LIABILITY FOR USE OF THIS MAP FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.



Residential

Residential land uses are areas suitable for dwellings. Residential land uses are divided into five subcategories based on dwelling unit density expressed as the number of allowable residential units on each “net” acre of land (“net acres” is the total site area less the area devoted to public streets). Planned Unit Development (PUD) communities, which allow for clustering of both detached and attached homes, can be incorporated into all residential categories if the overall development design is compatible with adjoining residential areas and the overall goals and objectives of the General Plan are accomplished. All residential areas allow for private uses such as parks, playgrounds, churches, day-care centers (both for children and the elderly), open spaces and home occupations, with appropriate zoning permits. The addition of accessory units on single-family lots is allowed in single-family zones.



Very Low Density (Up to 6 dwelling units/net acre)

The Very Low Density category of residential land uses is intended for single-family, residential units on large lots. Typically the Very Low Density category is to protect sensitive hillside areas from extensive development and to protect against hazards related to earthquakes, unstable terrain, and wild fires. In addition, Very Low Density land uses are also intended to protect sensitive environmental areas and features, and provide sites for larger, distinctive residences.

Low Density (7 to 9 dwelling units/net acre)

The Low Density category of residential land uses is intended to promote and protect single-family neighborhoods.

Medium Density (10 to 20 dwelling units/net acre)

The Medium Density category of residential land use accommodates more intensive forms of residential development while still remaining compatible with surrounding land uses. This category is intended to provide greater housing choice in the City for different family sizes and incomes. Medium density residential uses are intended to be located closer to community and retail services, such as neighborhood shopping centers, parks and open spaces areas, and near minor and major collector streets where greater access can be provided. This land use category includes a number of housing development types including duplexes, townhouse projects, apartments, and small-lot, single-family residential designs.

High Density (21 to 35 dwelling units/net acre)

The High Density residential land use category is intended to provide opportunities for multiple-family residential development in a well-designed environment. The range is intended to be located in areas where higher traffic volumes and buildings can be accommodated. These developments should be located outside of single-family residential communities, where services and transportation systems are adequate to serve the increased densities.

Mixed-Use Commercial

The Mixed-Use Commercial designation is intended primarily for all types of commercial uses and secondarily for residential uses or a combination of the two. The designation is intended to encourage ground floor, pedestrian friendly, retail sales and service uses with upper floors of office and residential uses. The Mixed-Use Commercial category applies to commercial activity ranging from neighborhood convenience stores to community shopping centers and regionally oriented specialty stores.

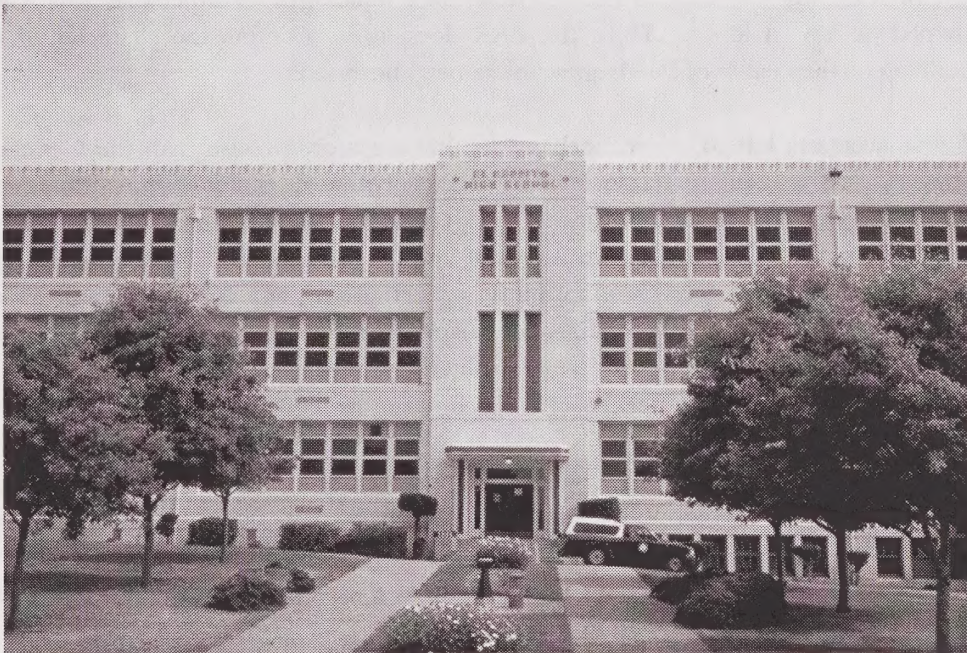
In addition to retail stores, the Mixed-Use Commercial designation is also intended to allow for residential and office uses, including administrative, professional, medical and dental offices, and “high-tech” research and development uses and laboratories. The Mixed-Use Commercial designation also allows for limited, small-scale specialty manufacturing uses, such as arts and crafts, woodworking, and assembly processes, when located on sites compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

Parks and Open Space*

This designation is applied to public and privately owned lands used for low-intensity, open space activities, such as hiking, walking, or picnicking; environmentally sensitive lands and habitats; creeks; and City parks and recreation facilities.

Institutional and Utilities

This designation is applied to public and privately owned lands used for activities such as private utilities (electrical, gas, water, and telecommunications), schools (both private and public), and other city, county, state or federal facilities. A major intent of this land use designation is to preserve and protect limited valuable



resources, facilities and sites for possible future public use and to allow for careful consideration by the City Council of changes in land use when private institutional uses are no longer viable.

* In 1997, the City sold a site of approximately 2.76 acres between Moeser Lane and the PG & E transmission lines, near Seaview Avenue. The site was designated open space at the time of the sale. The buyer has stated an intention to subdivide the property for single-family lots. It is proposed through this General Plan to retain the open space designation of this property in contemplation of the property owner's application for a General Plan amendment as part of the owner's application package for subdivision approval. In this manner, the General Plan amendment for the property can be processed as part of development review for the subdivision thereby allowing for a clearer focus regarding development of this property.

Development Densities and Intensities

The density and intensity ranges for the above land use categories are as shown on Table 4-2. Residential and mixed-use projects shall comply with both the floor-area ratio (FAR) requirements and the density requirements, except that the FAR for projects built pursuant to state-mandated density bonuses may be increased beyond the city's allowable limits if necessary to accommodate the increased density.

State laws and guidelines for General Plans require that maximum building intensities be stated in the Land Use element. The adoption of a FAR – the total floor space of a building divided by the area of its site – is a common and acceptable way of meeting the requirement to define a maximum intensity. The FAR provides an outside measurement of how much building may be developed on a site; it does not provide any specifications about how tall a building is or otherwise how it is shaped or how it looks. Thus, the FAR does little to define the character of a building or the quality of buildings within a neighborhood.

Those tasks are left to other mechanisms that are more precise than the General Plan. To better regulate the quality and character of single buildings and groups of buildings, cities may specify various restrictions on height, bulk, coverage and setbacks of buildings, usually through the zoning ordinance. Another means of defining character is through adoption of a “form code” which may contain more definitive formulas of how buildings are shaped and how they relate to each other and to streets and open spaces. More qualitative standards addressing architectural style, materials, and other details are frequently set through a set of adopted design guidelines.

State-mandated density bonuses and city incentives may be used for the same project, but in no case should any combination of city incentives and state-mandated density bonuses result in a density in excess of the maximum allowed under either program as shown in Table 4-2.

For purposes of interpreting Table 4-2, the following definitions apply:

- Density is the number of permanent residential dwelling units per total net acre of land in the development site.
- Floor area ratio (FAR) is the gross floor area, excluding the area devoted exclusively to parking, divided by the total net area of the development site.
- Incentives include density bonuses, FAR bonuses, and other benefits that the City may grant in return for special benefits provided by the development project to the City; density and FAR bonuses may only be given pursuant to the criteria contained in the City's zoning or other land use regulations.

In order to convert density expressed in units per acre to density expressed in persons per acre, multiply by 2.32, the 1998 estimate by the California Department of Finance for the average number of persons per household in El Cerrito.

Table 4-2: Density and Intensity Ranges

	Density (du/acre)			Intensity (FAR)	
	Normal Range	With City Incentives	With State-Mandated Density Bonuses	Normal Range	With City Incentives
Residential					
Very Low Density	Up to 6	NA	Up to 7.5	NA	NA
Low Density	7-10	NA	7-12.5	NA	NA
Medium Density	11-20	11-25	11-25	NA	NA
High Density	21-35	21-45*	21-45	NA	NA
Mixed-Use Commercial					
General	Up to 35	Up to 45*	Up to 45	Up to 2.0	Up to 3.0
Neighborhood Commercial	Up to 20	Up to 25	Up to 25	Up to 1.0	NA
Parks and Open Space	NA	NA	NA	Up to 0.1	Up to 0.5
Institutional and Utilities	NA	NA	NA	Up to 1.0	Up to 2.0

*Within the High Density Residential and Mixed-Use Commercial land use categories, up to 70 dwelling units per acre may be allowed through a city density-bonus incentive program for housing for elderly and handicapped persons where there is a commitment to provide services such as congregate care, onsite counseling, or medical services for residents.

The City has an incentives program in place (Zoning Ordinance Chapter 19.32, adopted 1977, amended 1997). Under the program, development incentives may be granted for a project where the incentives will promote closer adherence to City objectives. Incentives may include increased density reduced parking, greater building height, or other deviations from regular zoning standards. In exchange for such incentives, the City will require desirable features, such as exceptional design, creative design of off-street parking, enhancements to public amenities, environmental benefits such as creek restoration, and similar benefits to the community. The program most frequently has been used for minor density increases in projects ranging from 5 to 20 dwelling units, never exceeding 40 units per acre. The program has allowed more substantial density increases for projects for the elderly and disabled, up to 76 units per acre. Some of those projects have also been granted increased height, reduced parking, and reduced setbacks. Appendix G is a tabulation of the results of applying the Incentives Program from 1983 through 1997.

D. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Goal LU1: A high-quality residential character within El Cerrito.

Also see Community Design Policies CD1.1 through CD1.9, CD3.1, CD3.4, and CD3.11, CD4.1, and CD4.3.

See Housing Element in Appendix A.

Policies	Implementation Measures
LU1.1 Predominate Single-Family Use. Ensure that the existing single-family neighborhoods remain in predominately single-family use, but including accessory units, by prohibiting incompatible uses.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • General Plan Consistency Review
LU1.2 Multifamily Neighborhoods. Ensure that new development in multifamily neighborhoods supports, rather than detracts from the existing residential character of the area.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Development Review • Design Guidelines • CEQA Review
LU1.3 Quality of Development. Ensure that all multifamily or mixed-use development in residential areas addresses compatibility and quality of life issues	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Development Review • Design Guidelines (except existing single-family) • CEQA Review • General Plan Consistency Review
LU1.4 Intrusions into Residential Areas. Eliminate, to the greatest extent possible, intrusions into residential areas from nonresidential areas, such as noise and commercial traffic and parking.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • CEQA Review
LU1.5 Suitable Housing. Promote suitably located housing and services for all age groups within the city.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Housing Program • Redevelopment Program

- LU1.6 Variety of Housing Types.** Encourage diverse housing types, such as live-work units, studio spaces, townhouses, co-housing, congregate care, and garden apartments.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Development Review
 - Redevelopment Program
 - Design Guidelines
 - Housing Program
 - Incentives Program
- LU1.7 Maximum Density.** Maintain the maximum multifamily density at 35 dwelling units per acre, except as otherwise provided in this Plan.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
- LU1.8 Neighborhood Maintenance.** Maintain the appearance of existing residential areas by discouraging paving of front yards and parkway strips, excessively wide curb cuts and driveways, and inappropriate fence materials in front yards.
- Development Regulations (zoning)

Goal LU2: A land use pattern and mix of uses that contribute to the financial health and stability of the community.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- LU2.1 San Pablo Avenue.** Promote retail, office, and mixed uses along San Pablo Avenue to provide more tax revenues to the city.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Redevelopment Program
 - Economic Development Strategy
 - Design Guidelines

Also see Community Design Policy CD2.2.

*Also see Public Services Policies
PS1.1, PS2.1, PS3.1, and
PS3.2.*

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| LU2.2 | Commercial Diversification. Maintain a diversity of commercial land uses to ensure stability during economic cycles and enrich the lives of residents. The maintenance of diversity includes encouragement of small businesses, both in terms of creation of new firms and retention of existing ones. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy |
| LU2.3 | Local Employment Opportunities. Promote economic development that offers local employment opportunities for El Cerrito residents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy |
| LU2.4 | Fiscal Impacts. Evaluate the fiscal impact of projects as part of the development review process to assure that new development does not reduce standards or unduly increase the burden on existing residents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Public Facilities Fee • Traffic Impact Fee • Impact Fees • Fiscal Impact Assessment |
| LU2.5 | Maximum FARS. Allow a maximum floor-area-ratio of 2.0 in all commercial areas except the neighborhood commercial centers where the maximum is 1.0 and except as otherwise provided in this Plan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) |

Goal LU3: A development pattern that enhances a strong sense of community.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- | | |
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| <p>LU3.1 Commercial/Residential Interaction. Encourage easy access to local businesses as focal points for neighborhood social interaction.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| <p>LU3.2 Midtown Center. Promote the organization of properties along San Pablo Avenue from south of Moeser Lane to north of Manila Avenue into a "Midtown Center" which may include a civic center.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Specific Plans • Capital Improvements Program • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy |

Goal LU4: A safe, attractive, and interesting community

Policies

Implementation Measures

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| <p>LU4.1 Mixture of Uses. Encourage a mix of uses that promotes such community values as convenience, economic vitality, fiscal stability, public safety, a healthy environment, and a pleasant quality of life.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy |
| <p>LU4.2 Availability of Goods and Services. Provide for economic development that assures the availability and diversity of resident-serving goods and services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy |

Also see Community Design Policy CD6.

*Also see Community Design
Policy CD1.3.*

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| LU4.3 | Street Frontages. Encourage attractive and accessible street frontages that contribute to the retail vitality of all commercial or mixed-use centers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| LU4.4 | Amenities. Ensure that new development provides a high level of amenity for users of the development, and, wherever possible, includes community-serving facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review • Redevelopment Program • Development Incentives |
| LU4.5 | Quality of Development. Ensure that all development in nonresidential areas addresses compatibility and quality of life issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review • General Plan Consistency Review |
| LU4.6 | Crime Prevention. Encourage the use of planning and design features that promote crime prevention to make the city safer and relieve the burden on law enforcement services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review |

Goal LU5: A land use pattern and types of development that support alternatives for the movement of people, goods, and ideas.

Policies

Implementation Measures

LU5.1	BART Station Areas. Encourage higher densities and a mix of uses near the city's two BART stations to take advantage of the transit opportunities they provide.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Specific Plan • Redevelopment Program
LU5.2	Mixed-Use Centers. Encourage mixed-use centers along San Pablo Avenue – including development along Fairmount Avenue, Stockton Avenue and Moeser Lane, between San Pablo Avenue and the Ohlone Greenway – that provide the opportunity for people to walk among businesses, employment, and residences.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Specific Plan • Redevelopment Program • Economic Development Strategy
LU5.3	Mixed-Use Projects. Encourage mixed uses, especially offices or housing over ground-floor retail uses, where commercial uses are allowed.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines
LU5.4	Neighborhood Commercial Centers. Support the maintenance and revitalization of small commercial centers within residential neighborhoods, recognizing that they serve as valuable community amenities. Where feasible, intensification or limited expansion of the three established locations, as displayed on the Land Use Map, may be permitted.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Economic Development Strategy
LU5.5	Pedestrians, Bicycles, and Access. Ensure that business areas have adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and accessibility for persons with disabilities, and that easy connections to transit are available wherever possible.	• Development Regulations (zoning) • Development Review • Capital Improvements Program • Design Guidelines

Also see Community Design Policy CD3.8 and Transportation Policy T2.1.

Also see Transportation Policies T1.1 through T1.4 and T2.2.

LU5.6 Development Along the Ohlone Greenway. New or substantially altered development abutting the Ohlone Greenway will be evaluated with respect to how the development enhances the aesthetics and ambiance of this important linear recreational and transportation facility, and how the development contributes to the security of users of the Greenway. The City will expect frontage along the Greenway to be treated as if it were public street frontage, with commensurate attention to design quality.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Development Review
- Design Guidelines

Goal LU6: Development patterns that promote energy efficiency, conservation of natural resources, and use of renewable rather than nonrenewable resources.

Policies

Implementation Measures

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.1 through R.1.15.

LU6.1 Natural Features. Preserve or restore the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation on and near development sites and open-up buried creeks where opportunities can be found, unless there are compelling reasons why this cannot be done.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Development Review
- CEQA Review

Also see Transportation Policy T1.1.

LU6.2 Circulation Alternatives. To the extent possible, encourage alternatives to the use of private automobiles. Encourage a full range of transportation options – driving, transit, walking and biking – without allowing any one to preclude the others.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Specific Plans
- Redevelopment Program

LU6.3 Environmental Businesses. Encourage businesses that deal in environmentally sound products and services to set an example for residents and other communities.

- Economic Development Strategy
- Redevelopment Program

LU6.4 Water Conservation. Require water conserving landscape design and fixture types in all new development. This policy is not intended to encourage the substitution of paved surfaces and other hardscape for plant materials.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Development Review



COMMUNITY DESIGN

Community design is the process of giving physical design direction to urban growth, conservation, and change. It is understood to include directions for site organization and planning, landscape design, as well as building design, including rehabilitation, preservation, and new construction.

The physical form and appearance, which are related to land use and transportation, establishes the character and image of the city, and influences the quality of life of residents and visitors. Land use policies establish the overall type and location of activities, while the community design goals and policies establish the “quality” of those places.

The process of making an urban design concept politically viable or economically feasible is a “piece-meal” decision-making process that goes on continuously, day after day, site by site. To shape the physical form and direction of the city, decision-makers need both a strong vision of what ought to happen and the opportunities to influence critical decisions.

Making physical improvements in the city is a process intimately connected to the social and economic conditions of the community. The design of cities is often unintentional, but it is not accidental. It is the product of decisions made for single, separate purposes, with interrelationships and side effects that have not been fully considered. The design of our cities has been determined by engineers, surveyors, lawyers, and investors, each making individual, rational decisions for rational reasons, but leaving the overall design of the city to take care of itself later, if at all.



This section identifies development patterns, community assets, challenges, and opportunities for change and improvement in the City's physical form and appearance. Taken together, these elements influence El Cerrito's visual image and character, and create a "sense of place."

The "sense of place," which can be designed, affects how one perceives and experiences the environment around us. A major goal of the community is to strengthen and protect those special qualities that make El Cerrito a great place to live while enhancing the character of the City through improving the quality of design and amenities. These special qualities include making El Cerrito a pedestrian friendly place with attractive streets, buildings, and public places.

A. Setting

El Cerrito lies between the dramatic shoreline of the San Francisco Bay and the green backdrop of the East Bay hillsides. The rising topography of the hills forms a strong north-south edge to the City on the east, while the I-80 freeway creates a formidable north-south barrier on the west.

To those who know it, El Cerrito is a community of graceful neighborhoods, rich with vistas and open spaces, and a number of distinct landmarks, physical features, and activity areas. To many "outsiders," however, El Cerrito's identity is primarily shaped by the views from the I-80 corridor and the suburban auto-oriented commercial strip along San Pablo Avenue. The freeway with its raised structure, berms and sound walls creates a visual, physical, and psychological barrier on the western edge of the City.

The tree-lined neighborhoods of Kensington and Albany bound the city on the south. The hillside housing of the City of Richmond and the unincorporated area of East Richmond Heights bound the City on the north. Just west along much of San Pablo Avenue is a section of Richmond called the Richmond Annex. Although within a different city, this residential neighborhood has a strong visual connection with El Cerrito.

Development Patterns

El Cerrito's urban development pattern can be divided into a series of distinct north-south bands or "layers" from the Bay lowlands on the west to Wildcat Canyon ridge tops to the east. These layers are differentiated by major physical elements, including the type and pattern of streets, primary activities, land uses and structures, and changing topography.

The San Francisco Bay

While physically separated from the Bay's shoreline by industrial and residential areas in Richmond, the San Francisco Bay forms our perception of El Cerrito's edge and is a strong orientation feature in the region.

The I-80 Corridor

With extensive sound walls, berms, freeway structures and constant noise and vehicular movement, the freeway provides an inhospitable environment for the pedestrian and limits direct connections to the Bay. The I-80 corridor, with its sound walls and berms, increases the City's isolation and auto-oriented character. The few connections under the freeway (Central, Potrero, and Cutting) offer limited visual relief and a generally foreboding environment.

The San Pablo Avenue Commercial Corridor

A wide, auto-oriented suburban boulevard and an irregular pattern of strip commercial development characterize the San Pablo Avenue commercial corridor.

The Historical Grid Neighborhoods

The residential areas east of San Pablo Avenue and the BART tracks consist of a traditional street grid, relatively small lots and a mix of housing types, ages, and designs. The higher density areas just east of San Pablo Avenue offer a transition from commercial to residential use. Some existing moderate density housing has been designed to integrate into the neighborhood fabric, while other box-like structures create a negative image. Lower density neighborhoods further east have generally quiet streets and a variety of housing designs. Several streets function as a north-south bypass to San Pablo Avenue (such as Richmond Street).

BART Tracks

The elevated BART tracks, with the Ohlone Greenway below, run north-south through the City of El Cerrito and accentuate the linear development pattern and form of the community. Higher intensity housing and commercial areas generally lie west of the BART tracks along the San Pablo Avenue Corridor. Lower intensity residential neighborhoods lie east of the BART tracks.

"Hidden" El Cerrito

Perhaps less well known are the residential areas west of San Pablo and Carlson, "hidden" El Cerrito. The Carlson residential area located at the base of Albany Hill shares the traditional grid street pattern and has a mix of housing types. With imposing views of Albany Hill, it is also bounded by an open and accessible part of Cerrito Creek. A second "hidden" area, West El Cerrito, is located just west of I-80, off Potrero. This area is physically separated from the rest of the City by I-80 but shares many of the positive qualities of the other traditional residential areas.

The Hillside Residential Districts

Further east, as development moves into the hillsides, curvilinear streets follow the hillside contours, the housing is generally larger and newer, informal trees and landscaping mask the houses, and urban sidewalks give way to street edges with curbs and gutters only. The diversity of these hillside areas is striking. Some are heavily landscaped, while other areas offer sweeping vistas of the Bay and beyond. Housing densities, ages, and styles vary. Steep open hillsides separate many of the lower hillside homes from upper areas. In most cases, the Bay view is the most prominent visual feature from the homes and streets. However, the views toward

these hillsides from other parts of the City and the freeway are as visually important as the outward views.

The Ridgelines

The final layer encompasses the East Bay hills and the open spaces and ridgelines of Wildcat Canyon Park. In some places, view homes back onto these open spaces. In other locations, the ridges extend into the open spaces of the Mira Vista golf course. These open spaces and ridgelines form a continuous and dramatic green edge to the City.

B. Community Design Elements

Community design is the process of organizing and shaping physical form in the landscape. This section outlines the major physical elements in the City of El Cerrito that contribute to making a more attractive place to live.

Gateways and Entry Features

Because it is bounded by urban development on the north, south, and west, there are few visual clues that one is entering El Cerrito. However, there are opportunities to create a more distinct identity and improve legibility and direction for residents and visitors. The BART stations lack signage, graphics, landscaping, and other symbols of entry. Orientation signage, kiosks, maps, art and distinctive landscaping and pedestrian features could help inform visitors approaching on BART and create a “sense of arrival” to the City.

Along the Ohlone Greenway, bicyclists and pedestrians have pleasant views of adjoining parks and open spaces, and are generally served by adequate signage for cross-streets and entry into the City. There are several areas where the views from the road into the greenway, with its variety of landscape features (such as a restored creek corridor), creates an inviting image. These areas merit protection and further enhancement. The Ohlone Greenway lighting program, recently completed, has been very effective, and additional lighting along the Greenway should be completed in the future. Signage may need improvement to make drivers and pedestrians more aware of the greenway.

For the driver entering El Cerrito there are few distinctive entries. The character of buildings, signage, landscaping, and land uses are relatively undifferentiated from one developed area to the next. Arriving from the north or south along San Pablo Avenue, there is a continuous uneven commercial strip development pattern with minimal signage and few landmarks. At El Cerrito Plaza, a driver views only a conventional City limits sign obscured by poles and retaining walls.

Similarly, residential neighborhoods are undifferentiated with surrounding communities. Many neighborhoods increasingly lack street trees as one moves north from North Berkeley and Kensington into El Cerrito.

The freeway interchanges also have no distinctive features that help identify entry. Opportunities for signage, landscaping, lighting, sculpture, and art, can enhance the “sense of arrival” and help create a distinctive and identifiable entrance for the auto users.

From the Arlington, an interesting brick gateway remains between Terrace and Arbor. This feature creates a distinctive tone and quality for the area. Other “gateways” of unique design could be used to distinguish and announce neighborhoods and commercial hubs throughout the City. Residential streets with a substantial tree canopy offer visual relief and interest along streets. Even a relatively discontinuous tree pattern can create visual gateways. Other street features can be used to identify commercial and residential areas such as traffic circles (e.g., Kensington Circle and Marin Circle) or extended sidewalks and planting beds.



The San Pablo Avenue Commercial Corridor

San Pablo Avenue is a continuous suburban, strip-commercial street. Typical of an older state highway, the strip has a variety of low-scale commercial malls, surface parking, and older one- and two-story commercial and residential buildings in a variety of sizes, characters, ages, and styles. These conditions will require a cooperative effort with the City of Richmond to create an attractive and unified visual character.

The streetscape changes throughout its length, with a mix of landscaped median designs and sidewalk character. The west side of San Pablo Avenue from approximately Bay View Avenue on the north to San Jose Avenue on the south is outside the City limits. Sidewalks are in various states of disrepair. There are few benches or other pedestrian amenities, and maintenance is generally lacking. Landmarks, distinctive architecture, crosswalks, and unique commercial and public activity areas are lacking. San Pablo Avenue could benefit from a conscious strategy to create distinct nodes of higher density and activity with public space and pedestrian amenities.

With the mixed-use Del Norte Place near one end of San Pablo Avenue and opportunities for El Cerrito Plaza redesign at the other end, El Cerrito's segment of the avenue has the unique potential for two lively and definable places adjacent to BART.

Activity Centers

Activity centers are where people gather to meet, recreate, shop, or do business. Centers can be formed at major grocery stores, neighborhood retail hubs, transit stops, and civic or community locations. Successful activity nodes work better



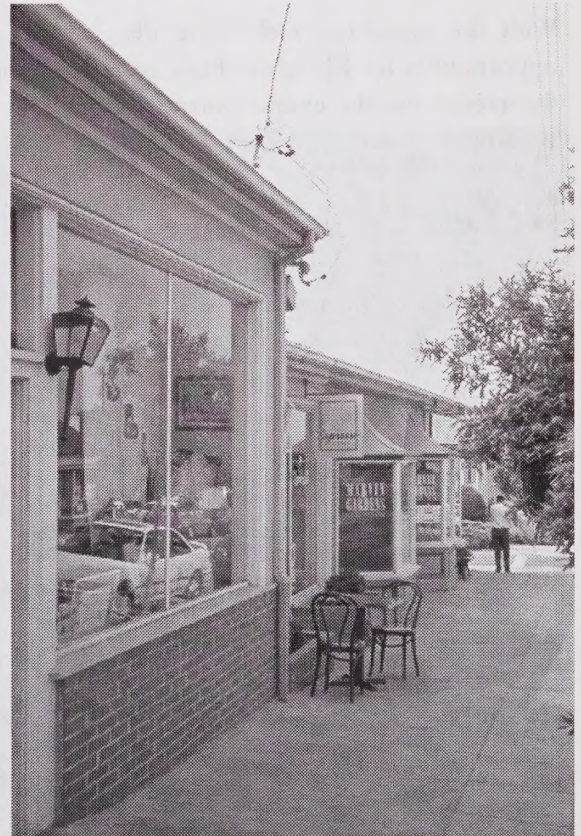
when a variety of uses cluster in and around a common location, create day and night activity, and provide a public space for meeting people. The most successful centers have a variety of places to eat, shop, play, and work—a place to see and be seen. El Cerrito has several existing centers of activity, but many need improvement to meet their potential.

Retail Centers

Several neighborhood retail centers are located along San Pablo Avenue. Generally anchored by a grocery store and a drugstore, these retail activity centers can also include banks, restaurants, and neighborhood-serving convenience retail stores. The existing centers are located at approximately half-mile intervals along San Pablo Avenue and provide retail access to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Although not pedestrian friendly environments from surrounding residential neighborhoods, they do provide for everyday necessities. These centers generally lack the visual character and distinction of more active and vital town centers. They are low-scale, single-use, and auto-oriented retail centers with large parking lots fronting the street, few pedestrian amenities, suburban-style architecture, and no public gathering space.

Just west of the City limits in the City of Richmond, the new Ranch 99 Market has created a regional serving, specialty retail center. Just north of the city limits, on San Pablo Avenue in the City of Richmond, is another major retail center. This center provides local shopping and retail stores to El Cerrito residents living in the northern portion of the City.

El Cerrito's centers could be enhanced with the addition of a small plazas and public meeting places, cafés and coffee shops, and the addition of pedestrian amenities, improved building facades, landscaping, and safe connections to surrounding residential areas.



Del Norte Area

The northern area, Del Norte, is more regional serving in character, providing a “big box” shopping destination around and north of the corner of Cutting and San Pablo

Avenue. The Del Norte area is an area in transition. Some of the older retail stores are now vacant. Due to the direct freeway access, new “big box” retail uses are replacing older strip commercial uses along this portion of San Pablo Avenue. The proximity to the Del Norte BART station, however, provides a unique opportunity for higher intensity, transit-oriented development.

El Cerrito Plaza

Some uses and stores in the El Cerrito Plaza are currently being remodeled. The current visual and design problems are evident: a sea of surface parking; blank building facades far from the street and sidewalk, no landscaping or pedestrian amenities, inhospitable buildings, single use with limited marketability, poor entries and signage, and an unattractive retaining wall. The importance of this site lies not only in its location at the door to El Cerrito, the commercial district, and BART, but also in its proximity to Cerrito Creek and its future development potential.

BART Transit Centers

The Ohlone Greenway provides a unique foreground to the BART stations. However, other design elements are lacking around the BART stations. The stations could be enhanced with new signage, landscaped parking, safe pedestrian ways to surrounding neighborhoods, and distinctive landmarks. BART patrons should be able to see inviting architecture and land uses as they exit BART.

Neighborhood Convenience Centers

El Cerrito has two interesting and attractive neighborhood serving, retail centers including the Fairmount Center at Colusa and the neighborhood retail cluster on Stockton. Another small neighborhood center at the Colusa Circle lies just south of the City limits. These areas offer attractive retail nodes to the east of San Pablo Avenue.

Midtown City Center

Some portions of San Pablo Avenue offer opportunities to create additional centers both large and small. The civic uses at San Pablo Avenue and Manila provide an opportunity to create a major Midtown City Center. Presently this is a single-use destination. Adding mixed-use retail activity, residential and office uses, and a public place for meeting and gatherings would enhance the site considerably.

Parks, Open Spaces, and Environmental Resources

Parks, open spaces, and environmental habitat areas are valuable resources for the community, both for active recreational use and passive visual enjoyment. The open space areas include existing schools and park spaces, as well as a portion of the steep El Cerrito hillsides. The existing Mira Vista Golf and Country Club and the Sunset View Cemetery add valuable open space to the city character and form. Several of the major hillside features add to the quality of these open spaces, including the Albany Hill just south of the city, the Canyon Trail Park, Poinsett Park, and Tassajara Park.

Creeks and drainages could make up a more significant part of the City's visual and recreational environment. The few locations where creeks are open provide



opportunities for viewing points, critical habitats, and walkways. Portions of Cerrito Creek may have potential to be “daylighted” and used for recreational purposes.

Views and Vistas

Views from the upper hillside areas of El Cerrito are spectacular, offering grand vistas of bridges, the San Francisco and San Pablo bays, Mt. Tamalpais and Marin County, the Golden Gate and, on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean beyond. The hillsides offer dramatic night views of San Francisco and other Bay cities. While many of the dramatic views are from private residences, the hillside streets, such as Moeser, Potrero, Cutting, and Barrett, provide public views along the streets.

Views from Moeser Lane are most impressive. The wide-open street, the steep elevation changes, and the low landscaping help create the wide-open vistas.



Overhead power lines, however, detract from the view throughout the length of the street.

Many significant views in El Cerrito are those looking back at the East Bay hills from the city below. Views to Albany Hill also add to the unique quality of the community, particularly in the southeast portions of the city, such as along Fairmount and Rockway Streets.

Special Features, Landmarks and Sacred Places

Landmarks and “sacred places” also shape our image of the city. Landmarks are typically special buildings, towers, spires, or natural features such as trees, rock outcroppings and hillsides. Landmarks help us to locate ourselves in space, mark

special destinations, differentiate one location from another, and create a distinct image.

El Cerrito has several distinguishing landmarks. Some of the most dramatic are natural features, such as a large rock outcropping at the top of Cutting Boulevard. Other landmarks are the churches and schools in the residential areas, such as the distinctive Chinese architecture of Windrush School on Cutting and Elm Street, and the Sunset View Cemetery Chapel at the end of Fairmount Avenue.

Sacred places are significant activity places in a community—places where people meet for either formal or informal events. Sacred places are created by tradition and use and not necessarily by distinctive architecture. Sacred places help to create a “sense of community” and history. Sacred places provide memorable experiences of our communities that give meaning and significance to our everyday lives.

El Cerrito has a number of interesting sacred places. Some are natural, such as Cerrito Creek, and others are created through traditional use, such as the Pastime Hardware Store on San Pablo Avenue, schools, City Hall, the library and the Community Center. Many informal, local meeting and eating places are also considered sacred places, such as Fat Apples restaurant on Fairmount Avenue.

Opportunities exist for creating new landmarks in the community, while enhancing and protecting existing landmarks and sacred places. Landmarks can be encouraged at the major activity centers in the community and along San Pablo Avenue. Landmarks can also be used to help identify the major commercial centers and the BART stations. New civic buildings, such as a new city hall can provide opportunities to create significant landmarks through dramatic architectural design, use of clock or bell towers, and a central public plaza.

C. Trends

This section outlines a number of design trends as major organizational concepts and design principles for shaping the future of El Cerrito. These concepts build on the existing land use and development patterns in the City of El Cerrito, listed above, and help set the policy direction for future design and development improvements, both in the private and public sector.

A City of Homes

El Cerrito will continue to be a “City of Homes.” The predominant land use pattern in the city consists of single-family residences extending into the East Bay Hills. Residents of the upper hillside homes have commanding views of the scenic San Francisco Bay. Smaller, well-kept homes form quiet residential neighborhoods in the areas closer to San Pablo Avenue. Residential densities increase in scale and intensity as one approaches San Pablo Avenue and the BART tracks. Housing types and design reflect the character, scale, and height of adjoining single-family residents.

This major land use and organizational pattern will not change in the foreseeable future. Thus a major goal of the plan is to protect and preserve the character of these residential neighborhoods. Improvements to the residential areas include undergrounding utilities over time, planting street trees, and improving sidewalks, streets and recreational amenities.

Three Major Activity Centers

The San Pablo Avenue corridor provides virtually all the development opportunities for new office work places and shopping. Recent development trends reflect that retail development forms are shifting from suburban strip commercial and community malls to more pedestrian friendly, transit oriented villages. El Cerrito’s unique location provides an opportunity to take advantage of these changing marketing trends.

El Cerrito has the potential to create three major centers—the El Cerrito Plaza Area, the Del Norte Area, and a Midtown Area. These three major activity centers





are envisioned as pedestrian friendly, mixed-use villages, with ground floor retail uses and upper floors of office and residential uses. Both El Cerrito Plaza and Del Norte Center take advantage of their regional location next to the BART stations.

These three major centers are connected along San Pablo Avenue, BART and the Ohlone Greenway with additional office, retail, and housing uses in between. Each center has its own unique character and function. The Plaza provides an opportunity for larger, high-end retail users providing goods and services both locally and more regionally. Del Norte provides an opportunity for a new regional work place with new office space for smaller, entrepreneurial enterprises, live-work studios, R&D office space, and for traditional insurance and banking services. The Midtown Center provides an opportunity to cluster development around new civic functions.

Neighborhood Retail Centers

Another design concept is to continue to provide local neighborhood retail opportunities in smaller neighborhood retail centers away from San Pablo Avenue. These small, unique shopping areas are clustered at the end of Fairmount Avenue and on Stockton Street.

A Pedestrian Friendly Place

Future improvements in the City of El Cerrito are linked by a system of pedestrian friendly streets, pathways, and open spaces. The pedestrian friendly concept is to create an environment that places an emphasis on the pedestrian, bicyclist, and public transit systems, slowing auto traffic and providing an attractive setting. Pedestrian friendly places are intended to improve the “quality of life” for residents by making safer, more attractive, and walkable places throughout the city.

D. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Goal CD1: A city organized and designed with an overall attractive, positive image and “sense of place.”

Policies

Implementation Measures

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| <p>CD1.1 Neighborhood Character. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods by limiting encroachment of new buildings and activities that are out of scale and character with the surrounding uses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Design Guidelines • Street Tree Program • Development Regulations (zoning) |
| <p>CD1.2 Design Concept. Plan and construct development within development activity centers and neighborhood commercial centers according to an overall design concept for each center.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Plans • Design Guidelines • Grant Funds |
| <p>CD1.3 High-Quality Design. Encourage higher-quality design through the use of well-crafted and maintained buildings and landscaping, use of higher-quality building materials, and attention to the design and execution of building details and amenities in both public and private projects.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Design Guidelines • Development Incentives • Development Regulations (zoning) |
| <p>CD1.4 Utility Lines. Encourage the undergrounding of utility lines where possible.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underground Utility Districts |
| <p>CD1.5 Landmarks Preservation. Inventory and designate potential sites and structures of architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Inventory and Designation |
| <p>CD1.6 Entrances to the City. Improve the major entrances into the city with landmark entry features, signs, and gateways to enhance the sense of community and improve the City’s image.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Entry Design Program • Street Beautification Programs |

Also see Land Use Policies LU1.1 through LU1.4, LU4.4, and LU5.4.

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R2.1 through R2.5.

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.12 and R1.13.

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| CD1.7 | Views and Vistas. Preserve and enhance major views and vistas along major streets and open spaces, providing areas to stroll and benches to rest and enjoy views. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Beautification Program |
| CD1.8 | Edges. Preserve and enhance El Cerrito's well-defined edges along the hillside open spaces, the eastern border along the regional park, and the I-80 freeway. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination • Development Review |
| CD1.9 | Building Design. A variety of attractive images will be achieved by encouraging a variety of building styles and designs, within a unifying context of consistent "pedestrian" scale along streets and compatibility among neighboring land uses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review • Specific Plans |

Goal CD2: A city with attractive, safe, and functional streets, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways.

Policies

Implementation Measures

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| CD2.1 | Street Frontages. Encourage street frontages that are safe, by allowing for surveillance of the street by people inside buildings and elsewhere, and are interesting for pedestrians. Require buildings in development centers and neighborhood commercial centers along San Pablo Avenue to be directly abutting sidewalks, with window openings and entries along the pedestrian frontage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Plans • Design Guidelines • Development Review • Development Regulations (zoning) • Grant Funds |
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- CD2.2 San Pablo Avenue.** Develop a design concept for San Pablo Avenue that includes street landscaping and improvements, and design guidelines that create an overall coordinated image and character of the street from north to south. Establish physical design standards for development in cooperation with Caltrans and, where required, subject to acceptance by Caltrans.
- Design Guidelines
 - Parking Districts
 - Specific Plans
 - Street Beautification Programs
- CD2.3 Streetscape Improvements.** Maintain an active program of street tree planting and improved roadway landscaping through both public and private means. Design guidelines shall describe appropriate types of trees for commercial areas – to enhance the shopping experience rather than detract from it.
- Street Tree Program
 - Design Guidelines
 - Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Capital Improvements Program
 - Street Beautification Program
- CD2.4 Multi-Modal Transportation Network.** Ensure that streets, paths, and bikeways contribute to the system of a fully connected transportation network to all major destinations in the City. The design of these streets and pathways should encourage pedestrian and bicycle uses by being spatially defined by buildings, trees, lighting, and street furniture. Pedestrian and bicycle pathways and auto routes should be compatible.
- Design Guidelines
 - Street Tree Program
 - Street Beautification Program
- CD2.5 Signs.** Scale and orient signs to both pedestrians and drivers along the street frontage. Building signs should be designed to fit within the scale and character of buildings.
- Design Guidelines
 - Sign Ordinance
 - Development Review

Also see Transportation Policy T1.1.

Also see Transportation Policies T4.1 through T4.4.

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| <p>CD2.6 Parking Layout. Encourage the development of common parking areas and common access for adjoining lots.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Parking Districts • Specific Plans • Development Regulations (zoning) |
| <p>CD2.7 Accessible Design. Site and building design must meet basic accessibility needs of the community and not be exclusively oriented to those who arrive by car.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review • Specific Plans |
| <p>CD2.8 City Sidewalk and Pedestrian Walkways. City streets and pedestrian walkways should be designed to be safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable, and functionally adequate at all times, including the design of pedestrian crossings, intersection design, sidewalk widths, street tree planting, street furniture, and signal timing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape Improvement Program • Street Tree Program • Beautification Program • Specific Plans • Design Guidelines |

Goal CD3: A city with attractive landscaping of public and private properties, open space, and public gathering spaces.

Policies

Implementation Measures

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.1 and R1.11.

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| <p>CD3.1 Tree Preservation. Preserve existing significant trees and tree groupings where possible. Replace trees removed due to site development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Development Review |
| <p>CD3.2 Usable Open Spaces. Require the provision of usable open space in the form of ground-floor patios, upper-floor decks, and balconies, as well as common recreational facilities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations • Design Guidelines • Development Review |

- CD3.3 Site Landscaping.** Improve the appearance of the community by requiring aesthetically designed screening and landscaping on public and private sites. Ensure that public landscaping includes entry areas, street medians, parks, and schools. Require landscaping for all private sites, yard spaces, parking lots, plazas, courtyards, and recreational areas.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Design Guidelines
 - Development Review
 - Capital Improvements Program
- CD3.4 Fencing.** Require that residential streets maintain open front yards and not be enclosed with fences that exceed three feet in height. Allow fences up to six feet in height to enclose front yards along major arterials, heavily used pedestrian ways or to protect yards from deer and other animals.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Design Guidelines
 - Development Review
- CD3.5 Creek Preservation.** Where possible, preserve and restore natural drainage ways as parts of the storm drainage system, coordinating with recreational and trail use.
- Specific Plans
 - Development Regulations (zoning)
 - Design Guidelines
 - Grant Funds
 - Joint Watershed Goals
- CD3.6 Cerrito Creek.** Where possible, open the Cerrito Creek channel, providing access and recreational opportunities along the creek in conjunction with its flood control function.
- Specific Plans
 - Grant Funds
 - Capital Improvements Program
 - Joint Watershed Goals
- CD3.7 Landscape Maintenance.** Require ongoing maintenance of landscaping on private property (except single-family residences).
- Beautification Program
 - Development Regulations (zoning)

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.7 through R1.10 and R1.15.

*Also see Land Use Policy
LU5.6.*

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| CD3.8 | Public Spaces. Create specialized outdoor gathering places in the three main activity centers along San Pablo Avenue – Del Norte, Midtown, and El Cerrito Plaza. Encourage the design of these public spaces to accommodate activities that encourage the presence of people at all hours of the day and evenings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Plans • Design Guidelines • Development Review • Development Incentives • Redevelopment Program |
| CD3.9 | Ohlone Greenway. Enhance the usability and aesthetic appeal of the Ohlone Greenway by integrating it into the fabric of the City. Design buildings with entries, yards, patios, and windows to open onto and face the Ohlone Greenway. Avoid blank walls, backs of buildings, and large parking lots adjacent to the greenway. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| CD3.10 | Greenway Spur Trails. Develop greenway spur trails for creekside access and access to the Bay for recreational use and environmental protection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvements Program • Joint Watershed Goals • Grant Funds |
| CD3.11 | Streetscape Design. Streetscape design (street trees, lighting, and pedestrian furniture) should be used to lend character and continuity with commercial districts and residential neighborhoods. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscape Improvement Program • Specific plans • City Entry Design Program • Sign Ordinance |
| CD3.12 | Landscape Species. Indigenous and drought-tolerant species that reduce water usage and are compatible with El Cerrito's climate are encouraged. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review |

*Also see Natural and Historic
Resources Policies R1.1 and
R1.11.*

Goal CD4: Well designed buildings that are compatible with their surroundings.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>CD4.1 Compatibility in Building Scale. Avoid big differences in building scale and character between developments on adjoining lots.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| <p>CD4.2 Building Articulation. Ensure that buildings are well articulated. Avoid large unarticulated shapes in building design. Ensure that building designs include varied building facades, rooflines, and building heights to create more interesting and differentiated building forms and shapes. Encourage human scale detail in architectural design. Do not allow unarticulated blank walls or unbroken series of garage doors on the facades of buildings facing the street or the Ohlone Greenway.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| <p>CD4.3 Front Yards. Provide front yards in residential areas with structures and parking lots stepped back along public streets in keeping with the character and setbacks of surrounding buildings. Ensure that yard spaces are landscaped appropriately to fit the surrounding context.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| <p>CD4.4 Natural Lighting and Ventilation. Ensure that building design takes into consideration air circulation, natural lighting, views, and shading areas to interior and exterior spaces.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Guidelines • Development Review |
| <p>CD4.5 Energy and Resources. Integrate good design with the use of energy efficient techniques and equipment, and with materials and construction practices that minimize adverse environmental affects.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Code • Development Incentives • Development Regulations (zoning) |

CD4.6 Sustainable Building Materials. Encourage the use of “green” and non-toxic building materials, and advise builders to apply for regional, state and national incentives programs.

- Development Incentives
- Grant Funds
- Design Guidelines

Goal CD5: A design process that achieves design objectives while being efficient and allowing for flexibility.

Policies

Implementation Measures

CD5.1 Design Review Process. Continue design review and approval process for all new development, changes, additions, and modifications of existing buildings (except for single-family homes on existing lots).

- Design Guidelines
- Development Review

CD5.2 Planned Development. Encourage planned development projects and other techniques that cluster developments to create and preserve open spaces, views, and other amenities.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Development Review
- Design Guidelines

CD5.3 Design Guidelines and Regulations. Make development and design regulations more understandable with use of illustrations, photos, drawings, diagrams, or other graphic and visually oriented regulations, such as a “form code.”

- Design Guidelines
- Development Regulations (zoning)

Goal CD6: An urban form that sustains a vital commercial community to meet the diverse needs of the local and regional population.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>CD6 Affordable Commerce. El Cerrito's urban form should allow site opportunities for commerce by local entrepreneurs – small business spaces in close proximity to other businesses with easy visibility from the street and close to abundant pedestrian traffic.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development Regulations (zoning)• Design Guidelines• Specific Plans |
|--|---|

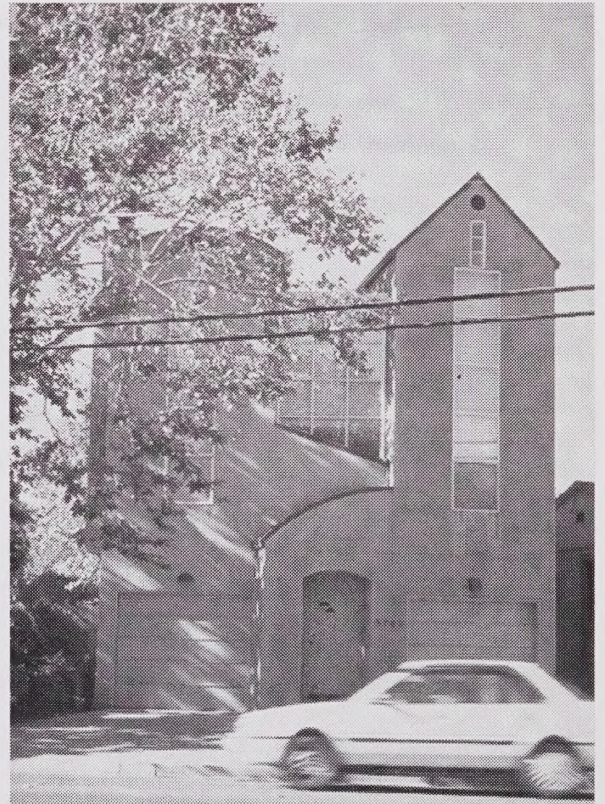
HOUSING

The Housing Element is one of the seven required General Plan elements and is an integral part of the El Cerrito General Plan. Because the majority of El Cerrito's land use is in housing, the Housing Element is a key component of the City's future plans. The Housing Element is subject to more state guidance and review than the other required elements. State law requires it to be revised every five years, based on the periodic regional housing needs determination made by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). Because of budgetary constraints; no new needs determination has been published since 1989; therefore, the Housing Element is not being updated as part of the 1999 General Plan Update Program.

The Housing Element was last updated in 1991 and adopted by amendment as part of the El Cerrito General Plan. Among other things, the element takes into consideration the city's housing needs as determined by ABAG and the potential for meeting those needs based on land use designations and an inventory of vacant and under-utilized properties. The regional allocation of 1989 was 722 units. Of those required, 339 units had been produced by the end of 1998. At the time the Housing Element was adopted in 1991, it was determined that, although the supply of vacant residentially zoned land in El Cerrito is limited, there remained adequate capacity to meet the city's share of projected regional housing needs. Of the total projected 1,183 additional units that could be built:

- 165 (44 multifamily and 121 single family) could be accommodated through infill development on vacant land in the city limits; and
- 1,018 (all multifamily) could be accommodated through development in the city's redevelopment project areas (principally around the city's two BART stations).

El Cerrito is expected to adopt a new Housing Element in 2001. In the meantime, the existing adopted Housing Element is included as Appendix A to this General Plan.



GROWTH MANAGEMENT

A. Setting

The Growth Management Element establishes a comprehensive, long-range program that matches demand for public facilities generated by new development with policies and standards for traffic level of service (LOS) and performance criteria for fire, police, parks, sanitary facilities, water supplies, and flood control. The Growth Management Element is concerned with maintaining defined urban service levels; it is not intended to limit growth or to direct growth into certain areas of the community on a priority basis. Most importantly, the Element's policies ensure that new development impacts that threaten to degrade established traffic performance or public service thresholds are mitigated through project modification, capital improvement programming, or contributions to improvements.

The Growth Management Element is part of the General Plan because Contra Costa County voters approved a one-half (.5%) percent sales tax increase in November 1988, commonly known as "Measure C," that includes both Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Programs. The overall goals of the Measure C program are:

- To relieve congestion created by past development through road and transit improvements funded by the proceeds of the sales tax increase.
- To prevent future development decisions resulting in deterioration of public services and acceptable traffic performance levels.



The Growth Management Element concerns itself primarily with the latter goal of the countywide growth management program. To be eligible for its share of revenue generated under Measure C, the City must commit itself, as matter of public policy, to carrying out the following objectives:

- Manage congestion by adopting and applying traffic service standards for streets, roads and Regional Routes.
- Adopt standards for fire, police, parks, water, flood control, and sanitary sewer services which will be met as the city grows, accomplished by 'Performance Standards' for provision of necessary facilities.
- Reduce dependency on single-occupant automobile travel through adoption of a local and countywide Transportation Systems Management (TSM) program applied to large-scale employers in the city.
- Anticipate needed investments by adopting a five-year Capital Improvement Program that lists projects, their costs and funding mechanisms.
- Ensure that new development "pays its own way" through mitigation and fee programs.
- Reduce the number and/or length of automobile commute trips by enhancing El Cerrito's housing and job opportunities.

B. Traffic Service Standards

Projected increases in travel have the capacity to influence disproportionately the shape and character of El Cerrito, if traffic congestion and improvements to the travel network are not managed through local and cooperative regional policy implementation. The Land Use Element (Community Development and Design chapter) establishes the timing and density of future growth within the city. The Transportation Element (Transportation and Circulation chapter), supplemented by the Growth Management Element's defined levels of intersection performance and policies for mitigation of traffic impacts, are useful sources of options and strategies to influence regional growth patterns that extend their influence beyond El Cerrito's borders.

Routes of Regional Significance

Measure "C" requires that all freeways and selected arterials in the county be designated as Routes of Regional Significance, or "regional routes." These roadways experience extreme levels of congestion, and carry significant levels of through-traffic to other parts of the Bay Area. There are many obstacles to improving conditions on these regional routes, including the high cost of expanding physical capacity and the uncertain role of outside agencies' funding decisions. Within El Cerrito, these regional routes include Interstate Freeway 80, San Pablo Avenue, and Cutting Boulevard.

Characteristics of El Cerrito's Regional Routes

Interstate Freeway 80

The freeway consists of three lanes in each direction through West County, with a 55 MPH speed limit. Interchanges serving El Cerrito include Central Avenue, Carlson Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Cutting Boulevard. Interstate 80 is the most congested of all regional routes. Congestion extends from Pinole Valley Road south to Central Avenue during the AM peak period and from Central to the Carquinez Bridge tollbooth during the PM peak period. Congestion on I-80 causes high traffic volumes and consequent delays on San Pablo Avenue, the primary parallel route.

I-80 has one of the highest percentages of through traffic in the west county corridor, with 52% of AM peak hour direction travel, measured at the Carquinez Bridge. Ninety-two percent of that traffic originates in Napa and Solano counties. Truck traffic, which contributes to travel delay, makes up 9% of total AM Eastbound (non-peak direction) volume, much of which enters or leaves the freeway on the San Pablo Avenue corridor.

The West Contra Costa County Action Plan identifies a number of improvements to the I-80 corridor needed by the year 2000 to alleviate the expected breakdown of capacity. Those improvements of most significance to El Cerrito include:

- HOV interchange at Cutting Boulevard to serve the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station (constructed)
- Parallel route improvements on San Pablo Avenue including signal upgrades (Phase I is under construction. Phase II will implement transit preferential signal timings and include physical enhancements to transit operations on San Pablo Avenue.)
- Transportation Management Plan to include transit, ride sharing, public information/marketing and vehicle monitoring.

San Pablo Avenue

In El Cerrito, San Pablo Avenue is an urbanized thoroughfare between the south City limit at Cerrito Creek Carlson to the north city limit just south of McDonald Avenue with two lanes in each direction. At most intersections there are left turns operating with left-turn signal phasing. The speed limit is 35 MPH. Average daily traffic volumes on San Pablo Avenue are greatest at its southerly extreme in the County. Near Cutting Boulevard, the highest average daily volume is 29,900 vehicles. During the AM peak period, the highest volumes occur near Potrero Avenue at 2,275 vehicles per hour. The highest PM peak hour period volumes occur near Barrett Avenue in Richmond, and frequently cause traffic backup into El Cerrito.

The San Pablo Avenue Corridor has been studied on a regional and local basis to determine the improvements necessary to maintain the routes as a parallel to I-80 and to serve locally approved uses. Coordination of improvements is difficult given the number of jurisdictions through which the street passes, and variety of volumes and functions that it serves. Alameda and Contra Costa counties are currently installing signal interconnect along San Pablo Avenue to improve inter-jurisdictional and intra-jurisdictional signal coordination.

Cutting Boulevard

The portion of Cutting Boulevard in El Cerrito designated as a regional route extends from Key Boulevard to the westerly city limit. It links San Pablo Avenue and the Del Norte BART station to I-80. The road encompasses two lanes in each direction with improved medians and left-turn pockets, except for a segment which is one-way westbound between the BART station and San Pablo Avenue. Most significant congestion occurs east of Carlson Boulevard. Measured delays at San Pablo Avenue have been relatively minor during the PM peak hour, and no improvements within El Cerrito are specified.

Regional Action Plans

Local jurisdictions are expected to participate in the development of programs to control regional traffic impacts on these routes through a series of Action Plans approved by one of the Regional Transportation Planning Committees created under Measure C. El Cerrito has been working closely with the WCCTAC (West Contra Costa County Traffic Advisory Committee) to develop an action plan for the west county area. Once approved, the Action Plan will be combined by CCTA with other regionally recommended Action Plans to create a countywide comprehensive transportation plan. The City recognizes that the success of attaining Action Plan objectives depends upon participation of other jurisdictions in both planning and funding of necessary improvements.

Basic Routes

All roads not indicated on the map of Routes of Regional Significance are Basic Routes. The Growth Management Element is required to assess the operating capacity of signalized intersections on Basic Routes, estimate future service impacts resulting from significant, foreseeable increases in home building and job-formation, according to the city's General Plan land use and housing policies.

Level of Service – General

Measure C requires adoption of traffic level of service (LOS) standards for basic routes, which are related to existing and projected land use. These standards are then applied throughout the remaining General Plan elements to ensure consistency in development decision-making. The Growth Management Element uses traffic LOS as an indicator of present levels of congestion at signalized intersections and as a measuring device to determine the success of congestion relief strategies. Measure C has standardized the criteria for intersection performance related to land use, based on the categories described in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3: Infrastructure Performance Related to Land Use

Land Use Type	LOS Standard	Volume/Capacity (V/C) Ratio
Rural	LOS C (Congestion)	0.70 to 0.74
Semi-Rural	LOS C (Congestion)	0.74 to 0.79
Suburban	LOS D (High congestion)	0.80 to 0.84
Urban	LOS D (High Congestion)	0.85 to 0.89
Central Business District	LOS E (Near Capacity)	0.90 to 0.94

Characteristics of Land Use Types		
Rural	Use:	Agricultural or Open Space designation in General Plan
	Land Area:	Characterized by large parcel sizes (10 to several thousand acres)
	Population:	One person/acre or 500 persons/sq. mi.
Semi-Rural	Use:	Agriculture on small to medium sized lots or low-density ranchettes; very low density housing
	Land Area:	Parcel sizes not less than 2 to 3 acres
	Population:	1 to 1.5 persons/acre or 500-1,000 persons/sq. mi.
Suburban	Use:	Low and medium density single family-and multi-family housing; community oriented commercial/industrial uses; 1 to 3 story building heights
	Land Area	6,000 sq. ft. to 3 acres
	Population:	1.5 to 12 persons/acre or 1,000-7,000 persons/sq. mi.
Urban	Use:	Medium and high density multi-family housing or single-family condominiums; low to moderate density commercial/industrial uses; 3 to 4 story building heights
	Land Area:	Not specified
	Population:	12 persons/acre or 7,500 persons/sq. mi. minimum
	Employment:	15 jobs/acre minimum
Central Business District (CBD)	Use:	High intensity commercial and residential nodes, characterized by large concentrations of jobs and clusters of buildings of 4 or more stories. Includes major commercial centers.
	Land Area	Not specified
	Population	Not specified

El Cerrito has connected these terms to the local street hierarchy in the Transportation Element, which classifies vehicle routes according to the character of surrounding development and their linkage to sources of traffic congestion from other jurisdictions. Table 4-4 describes the city's Basic Route signal controlled intersections and the minimum service level at which the intersection is expected to operate based on future development activity:

Table 4-4: Signalized Intersection Service Standards

Location	Land Use	Intersection Characteristics	LOS Standard
Fairmount/Liberty	CBD	Minor Arterial/Principal Arterial	'E' to 0.94 v/c
Fairmount/Ashbury	Suburban	Collector/Minor Art'l/Principal Art'l	'D' to 0.84 v/c
Fairmount/Colusa	Suburban	Collector/Principal Arterial	'D' to 0.84 v/c
Central/Carlson	CBD	Principal Arterial/Principal Arterial	'E' to 0.94 v/c
Potrero/Eastshore	Urban	Local Street/Principal Arterial	'D' to 0.89 v/c
Richmond/Stockton	Suburban	Minor Arterial/Collector	'D' to 0.84 v/c
Richmond/Moeser	Urban	Minor Arterial/Minor Arterial	'D' to 0.89 v/c
Richmond/Potrero	Urban	Minor Arterial/Minor Arterial	'D' to 0.89 v/c
Cutting/Key Blvd.	Urban	Principal Arterial/Minor Arterial	'D' to 0.89 v/c

Infrastructure Conditions

As a result of deferred maintenance, local streets have deteriorated to the point where reconstruction now is necessary in some cases. The existing traffic signals on Richmond Avenue have the oldest controllers in Contra Costa County, and parts no longer are available to repair them. Additionally, the Public Safety Commission has identified three problem intersections that may require the installation of new signals at a future date (Richmond and Fairmount, Richmond and Schmidt, and Key and Cutting). A program to reconstruct streets in the city's network will emphasize arterial and collector streets. The streets to be reconstructed first would be the lower portion of Barrett Avenue and Potrero Avenue between Arlington and Navellier. Reconstruction will include removal and replacement of deteriorated curbs, storm drain inlets and catch basins, new pavement, and installation of access ramps where feasible.

Level of Service and Future Land Use

Nearly all significant new increments of housing and employment will occur on parcels located within the San Pablo Avenue corridor, or in joint use with BART station facilities. Expanding jobs and housing opportunity inside El Cerrito's borders will not necessarily eliminate commute travel to and from the region. However, it will offer an alternative to the commuter lifestyle and enhance options for El Cerrito's economic development that do not burden the regional roadway network.

While most of the direct traffic impact of local land use intensification will fall upon Regional Routes such as San Pablo Avenue and Cutting Boulevard, it is equally

important that such activity not burden the basic route system and degrade the minimum service levels for signalized intersections described above.

The city is committed, as part of the region-wide effort to reduce traffic congestion and improve the efficiency and safety of its local street system, to monitor traffic conditions on a systematic basis and develop programs to maintain established service standards. El Cerrito is a "mature" city with only limited growth potential. However, even the relatively small increment of growth potential described in this Element can burden local and regional transportation facilities without a prescribed means of measurement and defined mitigation programs.

C. Urban Service Performance Standards

Park and Recreation Facilities

Service Function

The City of El Cerrito provides a rich diversity of parks and recreational opportunities. Parklands include approximately 32 acres of City-owned parks, 100 acres of City-owned open space used for recreation and conservation purposes, 23 acres of other City-maintained recreation facilities, and 27 acres of School District-owned and maintained recreation areas. More details are provided in Chapter 6.

Service Standard

Five (5) acres of publicly owned parkland for each 1,000 residents.

Fire Suppression and Related Emergency Services

Service Function

The El Cerrito Fire Department provides first response to structural, vehicular and wildland fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials, incidents and natural disasters. The Department's ability to meet to these needs is facilitated through active participation with Richmond, Kensington, and the West County fire departments in an automatic response agreement that uses the combined resources of all four agencies to serve these needs irrespective of jurisdictional lines. The departments share the costs of dispatch and training services and have established common standards for staffing, apparatus and equipment.

Service Standard

The interagency agreement specifies the following response protocol for all emergency service requests:

- Maximum response time for first engine arrival of six (6) minutes including one (1) minute dispatch time and three (3) minute-travel time from responding station.
- Three (3) person engine company is minimum response.
- Minimum training level of responders shall be Firefighter 1 and Emergency Medical Technician 1.

Police Emergency Services

Service Function

The El Cerrito Police Department's mission is to respond to requests for law enforcement emergency services, deter criminal activity, investigate crimes against persons and property and undertake proactive programs to reduce the opportunity for criminal activity. The department also acts proactively to reduce dangerous motor vehicle operating practices and offers community education outreach programs about personal and neighborhood security.

Service Standard

The Police Department is committed to maintaining a level of personnel and capital equipment for first-unit response in three (3) minutes to requests for emergency service. The City's resources alone are insufficient to meet the multiplicity of demands upon a modern police agency. Hence, the Department contracts with the City of Richmond for emergency dispatching, and with various state and county agencies for specialized investigative support services.

Sanitary Sewer and Treatment Services

Service Function

Two agencies work together to serve El Cerrito's sanitary sewer needs. Stege Sanitary District provides the underground lines leading from customer discharge sites to the regional treatment plant. That plant, operated by the East Bay Municipal Utility District at Point Isabel, provides tertiary level treatment to RWQCB standards for discharge to the Bay.

Service Standard

Service capacity planning is based on a 130-gallon daily increment per person.

Domestic Water Services

Service Function

East Bay Municipal Utility District provides domestic water service to residential and institutional customers in the city. Past droughts, which curtailed water service in some areas, have reminded people of the need to conserve water whenever possible.

Service Standard

250 gallons/day for each residential household to 4 (four) persons +62 gallons for each additional person in the household. 90% of 1986 use for commercial connections and 95% of 1986 use for institutional uses, to be reevaluated upon improvement in prevailing drought conditions.

Flood Control

Service Function

Flood hazards arise from natural rainstorms, failure of water storage facilities, and from the secondary effects of landslides. Storage tanks for East Bay MUD located south of Potrero Avenue below Bay Vista Court are considered at minimal risk of failure in a seismic event; however, their safety can be improved by installation of flexible couplers and check valves. Because the watersheds in El Cerrito's foothills are relatively small, risk of flood damage through the sudden release of accumulated water behind a collapsed mass of landslide debris is also small. The greatest flood hazard risk is posed by the current condition of the storm drain system that is under study for long term and comprehensive remediation.

Only a small portion of Cerrito Creek is subject to inundation in the 1% (100 year event). Property damage from such an event is predictable, but would be confined to isolated locations in the flood path. The Contra Costa County Flood Control District establishes maintenance and development standards in the floodway. The City has also established restrictive development policies in its Municipal Code as a condition of continued eligibility for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Service Standard

Containment of the 100-year flood event according to the federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Continued restriction on construction within flood hazard zones through establishment of minimum floor level elevations above the projected 100-year flood event level, as established by the Flood Control District.

D. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described in the following section of this chapter.

Goal GM1: A coordinated regional and sub-regional planning system that provides better service and less congestion for residents of El Cerrito

Policies

Implementation Measures

GM1.1 Cooperative Transportation Planning.

Participate in subregional transportation planning activities of the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee, including development of Regional Route Action Plans. Cooperate in remediation of intersections in other jurisdictions operating at a level of service below the desired minimum threshold when it is demonstrated that El Cerrito's actions contribute substantially to adverse operating conditions at such intersections. Such cooperative action shall only be considered in the context of an application by the other jurisdiction for a Finding of Special Circumstances in accordance with application procedures established by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

- Intergovernmental Coordination

GM1.2 Implementation of Action Plans.

Implement in a timely manner specific local actions of the Regional Route Action Plan following its adoption by the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

- Intergovernmental Coordination

Also see Transportation Policy T1.7.

- GM1.3 Conflict Resolution Services.** Seek the services of the Contra Costa Transportation authority's conflict resolution process when needed to resolve disputes with other jurisdictions related to the development and implementation of Actions Plans and other programs described in the Growth Management Element.
- Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal GM2: Compliance with applicable level of service standards.

- GM2.1 Application of Standards.** Strive to maintain the minimum V/C performance standard for each signalized intersection as described in Table 4-4. Level of Service Standards are considered to be met if measurement of actual conditions at the intersection indicates that operations are equal too or better than the specified minimum performance standard, or if El Cerrito's Capital Improvement Program includes projects which, when constructed, will result in performance better than or equal to the specified minimum standard.
- Capital Improvements Program
 - Development Regulations (zoning)

GM2.2 Achieving Level of Service Standards.

Consider amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element or Map, Zoning Ordinance, or other relevant plans and policies to alter land use intensity or vehicle trip activity so that any Basic Route signalized intersection which does not meet the minimum service level standard in Policy GM2.2 can be brought into compliance with said standard.

- Development Regulations (zoning)
- Capital Improvements Program

Alternately, consider amendments to the Capital Improvement Program or other relevant programs and policies which will improve the capacity or efficiency of intersections not meeting the service standards through physical construction and improvements.

GM2.3 Findings of Special Circumstances.

Consider requesting from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority a Finding of Special Circumstances for any Basic Route signalized intersection that may not meet level of service standards as described in Policy GM2.1 when it can be demonstrated that the amendments described in Policy GM2.2 are infeasible under the Authority's prescribed criteria. Prior to initiating the request, the City will evaluate policy options and changes, alternative standards, and proposed mitigation measures to achieve the minimum service levels and describe the findings upon which these alternatives were deemed infeasible.

- Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal GM3: Timely review of projects that are heavy traffic generators.

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- GM3.1 Traffic Impact Study.** Conduct a traffic impact study consistent with CCTA Technical Guidelines as part of the application review process for development proposals estimated to generate over 100 peak-hour vehicle trips.
- Development Regulations (zoning)
- GM3.2 Finding of Consistency with Standards.** Demonstrate that development proposals that generate over 100 peak-hour vehicle trips in the peak direction are consistent with the Level of Service Standards stated in Policy GM2.2, and the West Contra Costa Action Plan for Regional Routes prior to approval. Findings of Consistency may be made if a traffic impact analysis demonstrates that the project will not erode the minimum service standards at any Basic Route signalized intersection unless:
- (1). Projects included in the City's Capital Improvement Program or Street Improvement Program will result in attainment of the desired standard and fully or partially offset the traffic impacts of the project; or
 - (2). Findings of Special Circumstances, including appropriate mitigation measures, have been adopted by the City of El Cerrito and the CCTA.
- GM3.3 Transportation Demand Management Ordinance.** Adopt and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Ordinance.
- Transportation Demand Management

Goal GM4: Effective community-wide programs to reduce traffic impacts of new projects.

Also see Public Services Policies PS3.1 and PS3.2.

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| GM4.1 | Local Development Mitigation Program – Transportation. Adopt and implement a development mitigation program requiring developers to pay the costs necessary to mitigate impacts of their projects on the local and regional transportation system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic Impact Fee |
| GM4.2 | Local Street Maintenance and Improvement Funds. Support projects intended to meet or maintain Level of Service standards, to implement Action Plans for Regional Routes, and to provide mitigation for intersections Subject to Findings of Special Circumstances through Local Street Improvement and Maintenance Funds allocated by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. Revenue from this source shall not replace private developer exactions pursuant to Policy GM4.1 for transportation projects necessary to meet or maintain minimum service standards challenged by new growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination • Capital Improvements Program |
| GM4.3 | Capital Improvement Program. Identify in the City's Capital Improvement Program funding sources, as well as intended phasing, for projects necessary to maintain and improve traffic operations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvements Program |
| GM4.4 | Compliance Reporting. Complete and submit the required compliance checklist materials required periodically by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination |

Goal GM5: An effective system of providing urban services.**GM5.1 Local Development Mitigation**

Program – Services. Adopt and implement a development mitigation program requiring developers to pay the costs necessary to offset impacts of their projects on the local police, fire and park service system. Ensure that the local development review process includes consultation with contact agencies supplying domestic water, sanitary sewage and flood control service so that cost impacts are identified and appropriate mitigations included on a cooperative basis.

- Public Facilities Fee

Also see Parks and Recreation Policies PR1.3 and PR1.12, Community Facility Policy CF1.4, and Public Services Policies PS1.1 and PS2.1.

GM5.2 Performance Standard Review.

As part of the City's development review process, or through the local CEQA review procedure for defined projects, evaluate the impact of the project upon public services and make findings appropriate to project approval under the following circumstances

- Development Review
- CEQA Review

- (1) Performance standards will be maintained following project occupancy;
- (2) Mitigation measures have been incorporated in project approval documents sufficient to maintain designated service standards; or
- (3) Capital improvements sponsored by El Cerrito or the affected special purpose agency will ensure that designated service standards are maintained.

GM5.3 Capital Improvement Program.

Identify in the City's Capital Improvement Program funding sources, as well as intended phasing, for projects necessary to maintain police, fire and park service standards. Encourage outside agencies providing vital services to El Cerrito to maintain adequate funding and long-range facility planning activity to adequately anticipate future demands of growth and the life-cycle/replacement of equipment and infrastructure.

- Capital Improvements Program
- Intergovernmental Coordination

GM5.4 Contributions to Improvement.

Require new development to contribute to or participate in the improvement of public services according to the demand generated by the project occupants and users.

- Public Facilities Fee
- CEQA Review

IMPLEMENTATION

The following is a summary of the major tools available to the City for implementation of the policies in this chapter, Community Development and Design.

1. **Beautification Program.** A city beautification program is excellent way to increase public awareness and participation in creating good design and quality spaces. City beautification programs can take many forms and involve both the public and private sectors. They can include; design awards for building design and landscaping, yard maintenance; landscape planting programs such as flower planting, street tree planting; and, public art projects or other civic improvement programs. They may also include the development of public scenic turnouts, rest stops, and overlooks to take advantage of views and vistas from the hillsides. Many city beautification programs are sponsored jointly by the city government and local civic organizations to promote civic pride while enhancing the physical appearance.
2. **Building Code.** El Cerrito should consider adopting amendments to the Building Code that promote energy and better uses of natural resources. This could be the part of the charge to a citizen task force that looks into possible ways of encouraging El Cerrito to agree upon and adhere to applicable principles of sustainable development.
3. **Capital Improvement Program.** The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a compilation of the capital improvements planned for construction over the next five years in El Cerrito. It includes cost estimates, the phasing of specific improvements and associated costs and methods with which specific improvements will be financed. The City should continue to conduct annual reviews of the CIP and add money for transportation, infrastructure, and public facility improvements as funding sources are identified. The CIP also provides the basis for planning for and funding of a civic center and other community facilities.
4. **CEQA Review.** The City should ensure that the CEQA review process identifies impacts of new development upon the transportation system, utilities, and public facilities.
5. **City Entry Design Program.** The City can sponsor the design and construction of entry monuments and other landscape improvement projects to improve the appearance of city streets. These landscape improvement projects can also be developed in cooperation with civic organizations or sponsored by local business to create new entry signs, monuments, and landmarks at major entry points to El Cerrito.

6. **Creek Restoration.** The City may contribute through its storm drainage improvement program, or seek funding from other agencies or private sources, to restore various segments to creeks or other streets (on surface or through removal of pipes) and restoration of riparian habitats.
7. **Design Guidelines.** Design guidelines are a tool for ensuring that development is compatible with the surrounding area and that it functions well for the community. To the extent possible, the guidelines should be specific: guidelines that are quantifiable should be considered for incorporation into the development regulations.
8. **Development Incentives.** Providing development incentives to developers and property owners can influence good community design. Development incentives can be in the form of density and development intensity bonuses, reduced development standards (i.e., reductions in parking requirements, height restrictions, setbacks, etc.). Incentives may be granted where they promote closer adherence to City objectives by providing desirable features, such as exceptional design, creative design of off-street parking, enhancements to public amenities, environmental benefits, such as creek restoration, and similar benefits to the community.
9. **Development Regulations (zoning).** The development regulations, primarily the zoning regulations and subdivision ordinance, provide the standards for development, prescribe allowable uses, contain specific incentive provisions, and include other standards and procedures related to approval of development projects.
10. **Development Review.** The development review process includes discretionary review by the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, based on consideration of General Plan objectives and policies, and criteria established by the zoning and subdivision ordinances and other city regulations and adopted guidelines. Most discretionary actions are subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The development review process also includes administrative review of projects to verify compliance with Planning Commission and Design Review Board requirements, as well as standards set by the City through adoption of building and fire codes, engineering standards, and other regulations and ordinances. Development review should be used to assess the impact of new development on the demand for transportation and public facility improvements and to implement mitigation measures and other mechanisms to help finance needed improvements.
11. **Economic Development Strategy.** The city should maintain a strategy to retain and attract businesses. This strategy should be reviewed frequently to ensure that it reflects current economic and business trends and makes use of the city's advantages as a business location. The city staff, elected officials, and

business organizations should then actively market the city as a location for desirable types of businesses.

12. **Fiscal Impact Assessment.** The City should consider development of a fiscal impact assessment process that would identify the economic and fiscal impacts of new development projects. The process should establish size thresholds that trigger the assessment, integrate the assessment with CEQA review, and ensure that the fiscal impact assessment is not an undue burden on economic development of the City. Also see Implementation Measures in Chapter 6 on a Public Facilities Fee and Traffic Impact Fee.
13. **General Plan Consistency Review.** Review all public projects for consistency with the General Plan as early as possible in order to minimize wasted effort on projects deemed not to be in conformance.
14. **Grant Funds.** The City should determine whether grant funds are available from federal or state sources for restoring creeks, preparing design guidelines to reduce crime, and developing guidelines for pedestrian friendly areas near either or both BART stations.
15. **Historical Inventory and Designation.** The City should initiate, or work with a local civic group to initiate, an inventory of structures or sites that may have architectural, historical, archeological, or cultural significance to the community. The City should then consider action to list the most significant structures or sites on the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places.
16. **Housing Program.** The city's housing program consists of those actions necessary to achieve the policies of the General Plan and the goals of the Housing Element. The housing program should monitor progress toward achieving goals to ensure that suitable land and incentives are available. The housing program also includes the responsibilities of the Redevelopment Agency to support affordable housing goals.
17. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** The City should coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Contra Costa County, AC Transit, BART, Caltrans, and other applicable agencies. The Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA) West County Action Plan for Routes of Regional Significance (12/9/94) defines a regional vision for Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond, and El Cerrito. This document defines many of the City's positions with respect to regional transportation improvements. Some of the key Action Plan items are:
 - a. Support inclusion of the West County BART extension in the MTC Track 2 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) project lists.
 - b. Pursue every opportunity to speed the funding and construction of the West County BART extension to Crockett.

- c. Expand efforts urging MTC to determine the best express transit system(s) for the Interstate 80 corridor and, based on the results of the MTC study, encourage timely implementation of planned transit capital and service improvements.
- d. Promote Carquinez Bridge alternatives that will achieve mainline metering of Interstate 80 into West Contra Costa County.
- e. Support efforts by Caltrans, CCTA, and MTC to tailor capacity of the Carquinez Bridge improvements to downstream capacity.
- f. Support efforts by AC Transit to study the feasibility of bus rapid transit treatments along San Pablo Avenue.
- g. Support mixed-use development, high employment commercial, and higher-density residential development in transit corridors and near BART stations.
- h. Consider additional transit mitigation alternatives, as appropriate, in future Action Plan Deficiency Strategies.

In addition to, and in support of, these regional key items, the following are City of El Cerrito interagency coordination positions:

- a. As opportunities present themselves, improve freeway access to El Cerrito, particularly around the Del Norte area and at the Central Avenue interchange.
- b. Oppose transportation projects that would diminish access to Interstate 80 from El Cerrito.
- c. Oppose capacity enhancements to San Pablo Avenue except when the improvements serve local traffic and do not compromise bus, pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- d. Support physical enhancements to San Pablo Avenue to make it a transit and pedestrian friendly multi-modal street.

In addition to the above, the City should work with Caltrans to install adequate highway landscaping improvements along I-80.

18. **Joint Watershed Goals.** In 1995 the cities of El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley and Richmond, the East Bay Regional Park district, and the University of California at Berkeley, endorsed a goals statement expressing mutual intentions to restore creeks to natural conditions, to make use of creek corridors for pedestrian and bicycle transportation purposes, to assure adequate flow of freshwater for nourishment of creeks, and to promote public awareness of the value of healthy watersheds. The statement includes a mutual agreement to seek opportunities for grants and other cooperative efforts.

19. **Parking Districts.** Parking districts can be formed by local property owners to help finance needed parking in impacted commercial areas. Parking districts provide for centralized parking lots and parking structures that allow participants to build and rehabilitate existing buildings at a higher intensity of development.
20. **Public Facilities Fee.** The City should consider adopting a citywide public facilities impact fee ordinance, under the requirements of the applicable laws, to fund new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in the City.
21. **Redevelopment Program.** In support of its economic development strategy the City may choose to use the authority of its Redevelopment Agency in attracting and retaining business and other activities, and in providing supportive public improvements.
22. **Sign Ordinance.** The sign ordinance is tool to regulate the appearance, size, and location of signs in the City of El Cerrito. Well-designed signs contribute to the overall visual quality of the built environment by reducing clutter as well as helping in way-finding and locating business and other activities.
23. **Special Districts.** Special districts can be formed by local property owner to help finance desired neighborhood improvements including street lighting, streetscape enhancements, and landscaping improvements.
24. **Specific Plans.** Certain areas of the city need to be planned comprehensively, but in more detail than can be done in a general plan. A specific plan can integrate land use, design, transportation, utilities and other issues into an action strategy. Areas to be considered for a specific plan include the Midtown area along San Pablo Avenue, extending from south of Moeser to north of Manila Avenue, and the Del Norte BART station area. A specific plan for the El Cerrito Plaza area, including the BART station and the area along San Pablo Avenue between Fairmount and Central avenues, should be prepared to provide overall direction during the next 20 years.
25. **Street Beautification Programs.** Seek funding opportunities, such as TEA-21 funds, from federal and state agencies and from non-profit foundations, such as ReLeaf, to implement street beautification programs, including street tree and median planting.
26. **Street Tree Program.** A citywide street tree planting program can dramatically enhance neighborhood streets, increase property values, and improve the overall appearance of the city. The city should continue its street tree planting program by offering free street trees to any resident or business in the City.

27. **Streetscape Improvement Program.** Many of the commercial streets in El Cerrito can be improved with a concerted effort to provide new improvements to make the right-of-way more attractive and pedestrian friendly environments. Selected streets can be improved with pedestrian streetscape amenities, decorative lighting, decorative crosswalks, and additional landscaping. Special street improvement projects can be phased over time and included in revitalization efforts of major areas along San Pablo Avenue.
28. **Traffic Impact Fee.** To help avoid public costs of traffic impacts, the City should consider collecting a traffic impact fee from developers of projects, citywide. Fee payments would fund transportation improvements to mitigate the traffic impacts of new development. The traffic impact fee would be in-lieu of the off-site mitigation requirements, but would not replace the developer's responsibility for frontage improvements. The traffic impact fee may be used to fund roadway extensions, intersection improvements, safety improvements, or improvements and amenities to pedestrian, bicycle or transit facilities.
29. **Travel Demand Management (TDM).** Support and promote TDM measures to reduce the percentage of person trips made by automobile and to reduce the annual vehicle miles of travel. Reduce the percentage of trips made by automobile and provide the opportunity and facilities to divert trips from automobiles to other modes. Encourage small businesses in areas of employment concentration to form cooperatives that can collectively provide effective TDM options to employees.
30. **Underground Utility Districts.** Creating underground utility districts is a way of financing undergrounding of overhead utility lines. This process can speed up the process of removing overhead utility lines along selected streets.



Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation

CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Transportation and circulation – the movement of people by all modes, and provision of support facilities, most notably parking – are crucial to quality of life and economic vitality. They are also key components of providing emergency services and facilitating the movement of goods. Circulation is also a mandatory general plan element.

The circulation element describes those services, facilities and capital improvements needed to facilitate vehicle, pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and emergency transportation. It also describes means for promoting and encouraging the use of alternative transportation modes, accommodating growth in travel demand, and preserving safety.

A. Setting

Street and Highway System

Street Hierarchy

Although El Cerrito has a hierarchy of highways and streets, it lacks a central business district with a traditional grid pattern of streets. Instead, the City is developed along San Pablo Avenue, which serves as its spine. El Cerrito's existing streets and their functional classifications are shown in Figure 6.

Freeways and Interchanges

Interstate 80 is the major freeway serving El Cerrito, although Interstate 580 is also located in the area. Historically, Interstate 80 has been heavily congested in the southbound (westbound) direction in the a.m. peak period and the northbound (eastbound) direction in the p.m. peak period. Recent reports indicate that Interstate 80 ranks among the top five most congested freeways in the San Francisco Bay Area. Caltrans has recently completed construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes and will soon be completing the remainder of the ramp improvements on I-80.

Three interchanges provide access from Interstate 80 to El Cerrito:

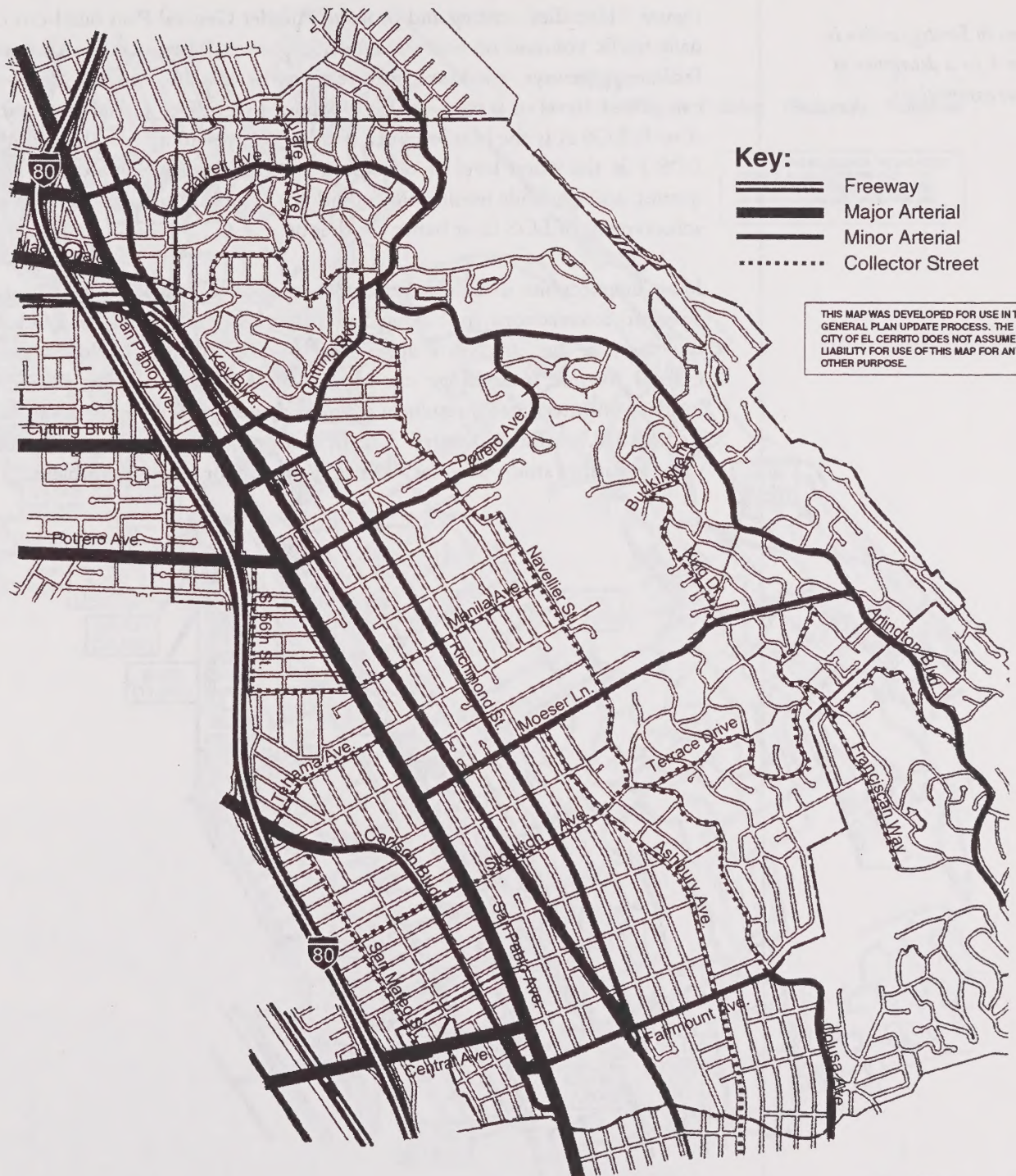
1. The Central Avenue Interchange is the first El Cerrito Interchange from the south. Although the interchange is located in the City of Richmond, as is the Interstate 580 Interchange with Central Avenue, Central Avenue is the primary travel route to southern El Cerrito, the El Cerrito Plaza and the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station.
2. The Carlson Boulevard Interchanges with Interstate 80 and 580 are also located in the City of Richmond. Although these interchanges provide access to areas of

the Richmond Annex, they provide only limited benefit to the City of El Cerrito because there is no direct connection between Carlson Boulevard and San Pablo Avenue in the vicinity of the interchanges.

3. The Cutting Boulevard/Potrero Avenue Interchange with Interstate 80 is a split interchange with Cutting Boulevard providing the northbound I-80 on- and off-ramps and Potrero Avenue providing the southbound Interstate 80 on- and off-ramps. This split freeway ramp configuration, in combination with the heavy traffic flows to and from local businesses, adjacent residential areas, and the BART Station creates congestion in the Del Norte area.

Traffic conditions on Interstate 80 and at its interchanges have a major influence on El Cerrito surface streets. When an accident or unusual condition causes a breakdown in freeway traffic flow, regional traffic diverts to local arterials: San Pablo Avenue (State Route 123) and the portions of Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Central Avenue west of San Pablo Avenue. San Pablo Avenue is very heavily affected by regional transportation conditions because it parallels Interstate 80 from the City of Emeryville to the City of San Pablo and beyond as far as the Carquinez Bridge, serving as an alternative travel route for regional and semi-regional traffic.






 NORTH
 Not to Scale

Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure 6 ROADWAY AND TRANSPORTATION CLASSIFICATION

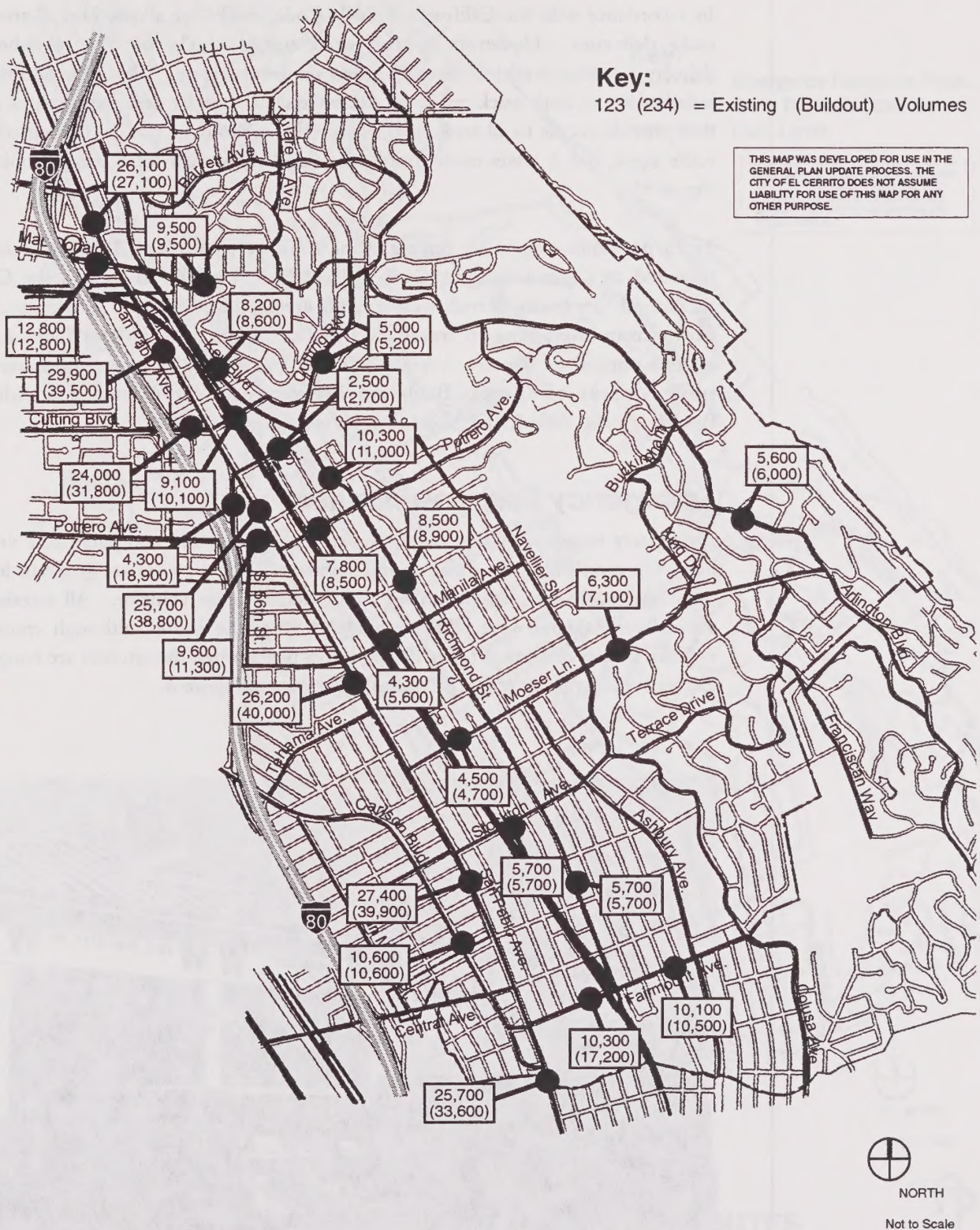


See Growth Strategy section in Chapter 4 for a description of build-out assumptions.

Traffic Operations

Figure 7 identifies existing and projected (under General Plan build-out conditions) daily traffic volumes on area streets and highways. The operation of transportation facilities (freeways, roadways, intersections) is classified in six "level-of-service" categories. Level of service (LOS) is defined in terms of a letter grade ranging from A to F. LOS A is the best level of operation, representing free flow conditions, and LOS F is the worst level of operation, representing excessive delays, long vehicle queues, and generally intolerable conditions. The City of El Cerrito policy calls for achievement of LOS D or better conditions.

Most intersections in El Cerrito currently operate at LOS C or better. All City operated intersections (not along San Pablo Avenue) operate at LOS A. Traffic operation in the Del Norte area, other portions of San Pablo Avenue, and the Central Avenue Interchange can be as bad as LOS E or F conditions when an incident on Interstate 80 results in a higher-than-normal diversion of regional traffic. As of 1999, traffic on Central Avenue can be quite backed up. It is not known, without further study, whether this is a temporary or ongoing problem.



Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

**Figure 7 TRAFFIC VOLUMES
1998 AND GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT**



Truck Routes

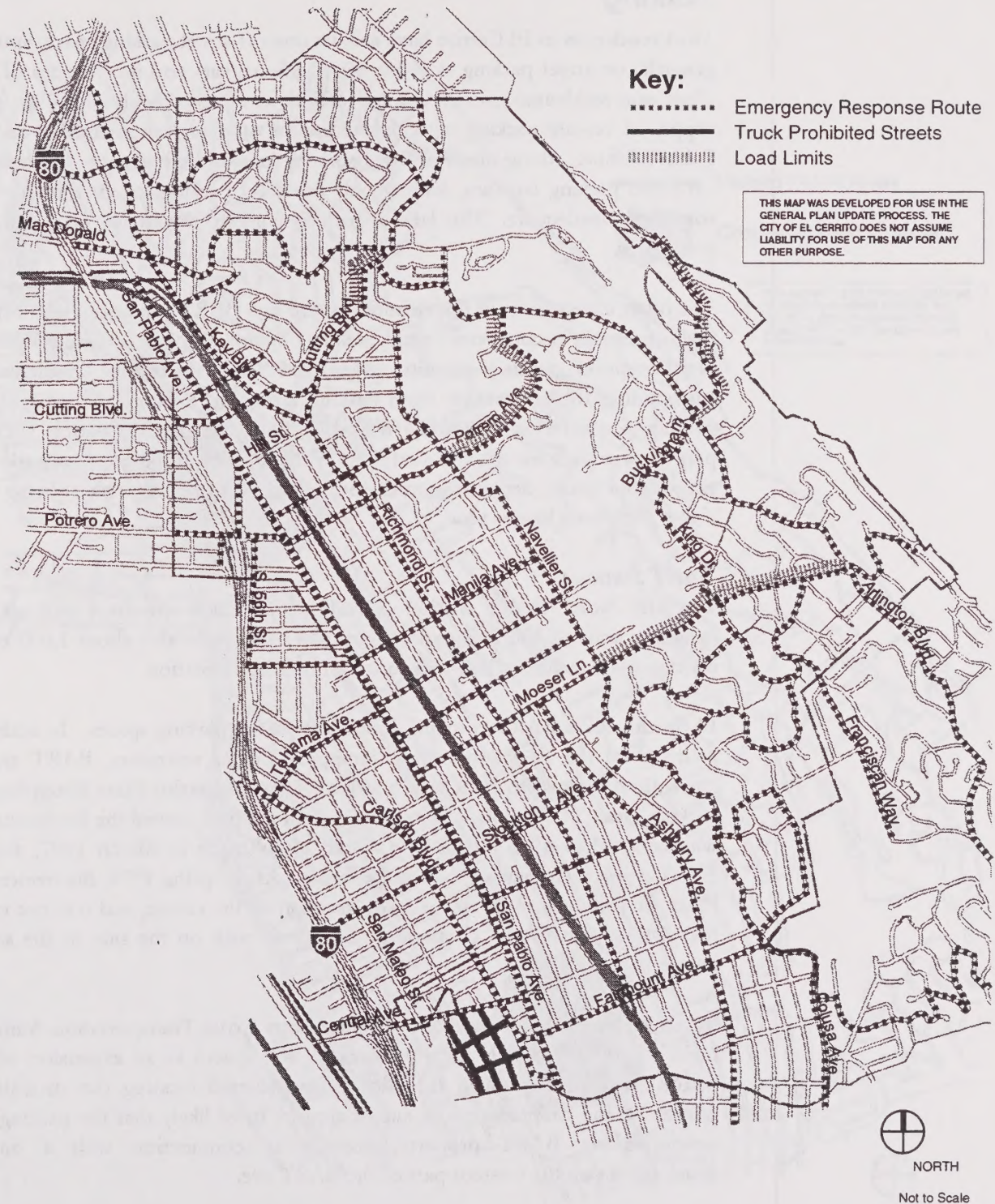
In accordance with the California Vehicle Code, trucks are allowed on all streets to make deliveries. However, through truck traffic (trucks on a street where no delivery is being made) is not permitted on local streets. The state allows local jurisdictions to limit truck traffic on other streets as well by designating truck routes that provide access to all areas of the City. El Cerrito does not post accepted truck route signs, but it posts truck prohibitions and areas with truck weight limits (see Figure 8).

Truck prohibition signs are posted in the southwest corner of the City in the area bounded by Central Avenue, Carlson Boulevard, Cerrito Creek, and the City of Richmond City limits. Truck weight limits are used in El Cerrito to prohibit heavy trucks from attempting to travel on steep streets such as Moeser Lane and the eastern portion of Potrero Avenue. Other streets with truck weight limits are a small segment of Cutting Boulevard between Fairview Avenue and Arlington Boulevard, and Rifle Range Road east of Arlington Boulevard.

Emergency Response Routes

Emergency response routes are the routes that police, fire and paramedic vehicles use when traveling to the scene of an emergency. These routes are generally located on streets with adequate width to accommodate large vehicles. All arterials are generally considered part of the emergency response routes, although emergency vehicles may avoid these streets during heavy peaks when the arterials are congested. El Cerrito emergency response routes are shown in Figure 8.





Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure 8 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND TRUCK ROUTES



Parking

Most residences in El Cerrito have at least one off-street parking space, and there is generally on-street parking available for additional cars and the vehicles of visitors. Most non-residential uses (retail and office) in El Cerrito also have an adequate supply of on-site parking with the exception of many commercial areas on San Pablo Avenue. Along much of San Pablo Avenue, older businesses do not provide off-street parking facilities, leaving only on-street parking for customers, which is sometimes inadequate. This lack of parking tends to thwart full productive use of properties.

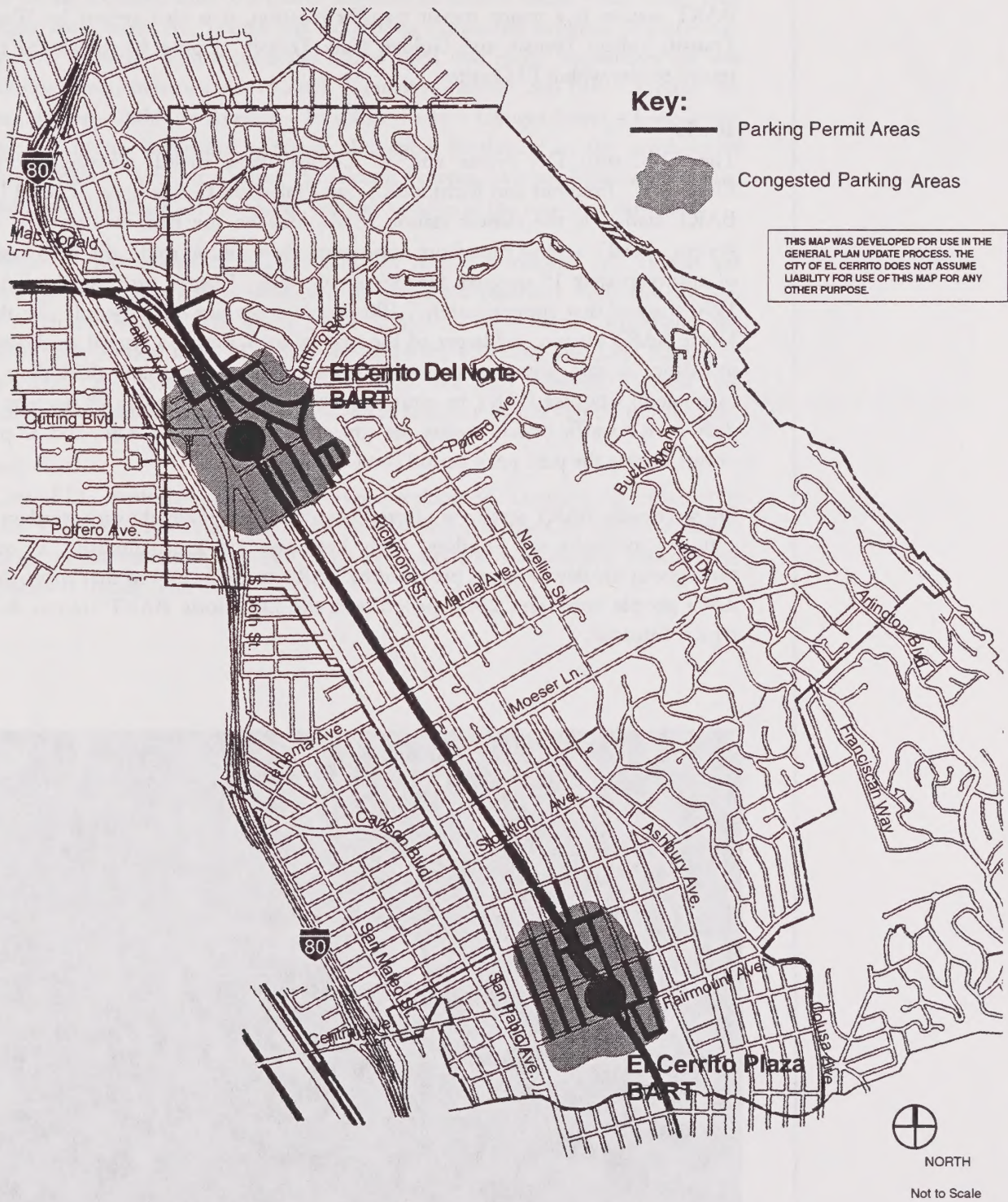
The other exception is in the vicinities of the two BART stations, which experience high parking occupancies and parking spillover onto adjacent properties. Neighborhood parking permits have been used to protect residential areas surrounding BART stations from parking intrusion. In areas with neighborhood parking permits (see Figure 9), residents displaying parking permit stickers are permitted to park for an unlimited time. Vehicles without permits can park for only two or four hours, depending on the posted sign, and run the risk of being ticketed if they park for a longer time.

BART Stations

The Del Norte BART Station provides over 2,000 off-street parking spaces, including about 1,300 in a parking structure. There are also about 1,000 on-street parking spaces within a half-mile radius of the BART Station.

El Cerrito Plaza BART contains about 800 on-site parking spaces. In addition, by courtesy of the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center operators, BART riders are currently permitted to park on a portion of the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center parking area. This generally is parking that, in the past, served the Emporium store, which closed in 1996. Based on observations made in March 1997, about 350 BART riders were parking on the Plaza site. As of spring 1999, the owners of the Plaza are proposing substantial reconstruction of the center, and it is not expected that BART patrons will continue to be able to park on the side of the shopping center.

Funds are available to the City from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to build a parking structure of approximately 400 spaces as an expansion of BART patron parking. Although the City has considered locating the structure on a portion of the shopping center site, it appears most likely that the parking will be developed on BART property, possibly in conjunction with a mixed-use development on the western part of the BART site.



Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure 9 PARKING ISSUES



Transit

El Cerrito is served primarily by AC Transit and BART but, because the Del Norte BART station is a major transit transfer location, it is also served by WestCAT Transit, Vallejo Transit, and Golden Gate Transit. Figure 10 shows the current transit routes within El Cerrito.

BART

The El Cerrito Del Norte and El Cerrito Plaza BART stations lie on the Richmond - Fremont and Richmond - San Francisco/Colma lines. The El Cerrito BART station is the closest station to the Bay on the East Bay portion of the system. BART service runs from approximately 4 a.m. to midnight, with headways of approximately 15 minutes throughout the day. Figures provided by BART in 1996 showed that approximately 7,100 people enter and 8,000 people exit the Del Norte BART station, the larger of the two stations, during a typical weekday. The imbalance is due primarily to morning peak period carpoolers (including casual carpoolers) who use BART to return in the afternoon. Roughly 28 percent of the daily BART traffic occurs during the a.m. peak period (6 to 9 a.m.) and 32 percent occurs during the p.m. peak period (4 to 7 p.m.).

On weekends, BART service is offered from 6 a.m. to midnight on Saturdays and 8 a.m. to midnight on Sundays, with headways of approximately 20 minutes throughout the day. Figures provided by BART in 1996 showed that approximately 2,500 people enter and 2,900 people exit the Del Norte BART station during a typical Saturday.



AC Transit

AC Transit bus coverage within El Cerrito is fairly comprehensive, with most houses within a quarter mile of a transit stop and all houses within a half-mile. Due to budget constraints, AC Transit has reduced or eliminated weekend and off-peak (particularly evening) service on many routes such that route frequencies are less than desired frequencies on most routes. Transit routes are: San Pablo Avenue; the Colusa Avenue – Ashbury Avenue – Navellier Street – Ganges Street – Glen Mawr Avenue – Cutting Boulevard corridor; Arlington Boulevard in the north-south directions; Barrett Avenue; Cutting Boulevard; Potrero Avenue; Stockton Avenue; and the Central Avenue – Fairmount Avenue corridor in the east-west direction.

San Pablo Avenue is one of AC Transit's key transit corridors. AC Transit has received grant funding and is scheduled to prepare a planning study for the San Pablo Avenue corridor. The study will evaluate bus rapid transit treatments for high-frequency routes: Line 72, which serves North Oakland, and Line 82, which serves South and East Oakland. The study will also evaluate physical and technological enhancements that can be used to improve transit vehicle travel times.

Transit First

The City of El Cerrito has taken a step toward making AC Transit more efficient by adopting a Transit First Policy. It is the official policy of the City of El Cerrito to encourage public transit among El Cerrito residents and visitors, and expedite the movement of transit vehicles.





Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure 10 TRANSIT ROUTES



Bicycles and Pedestrians

Bicycles

Bicycle travel is possible on several north-south and east-west streets in the City of El Cerrito. Topography poses a serious challenge to bicycling and walking in the eastern portion of the City, but the majority of El Cerrito streets are flat or have only small grades (5 percent or less). Figure 11 shows the existing bicycle and trail facilities in El Cerrito.

The City of El Cerrito has a number of hiking trails and dedicated public paths, but the Ohlone Greenway, which travels under the BART tracks from the City's southern border to San Pablo Avenue just south of MacDonald Avenue, is the only formal multi-use trail. The El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center renovation may also include a multi-use trail along Cerrito Creek at the City's southern boundary. Albany proposes a continuation of this trail to Pierce Street along the southern side of Cerrito Creek in its Bicycle Master Plan, but the two cities would likely need to work together on this effort since Cerrito Creek forms the border between the cities.

There are a number of informal trails in the City of El Cerrito that provide hiking and mountain-biking opportunities. These trails are unimproved pathways in many locations but provide high quality recreation experiences.

El Cerrito does not currently have any bike lanes or bike routes, but a number of streets are wide enough to permit easy implementation. The City of Albany *Bicycle Master Plan* proposes bike lanes on Santa Fe Avenue, which leads to Colusa Avenue, and bike routes on Cornell Avenue, which leads to El Cerrito Plaza and aligns roughly with Liberty Street, and Adams Street, which aligns with Carlson Boulevard. At Adams Street, a bicycle and pedestrian bridge is proposed over the Cerrito Creek.

Both BART stations, El Cerrito Plaza, and many schools currently provide bicycle parking facilities. BART stations have historically been locations where bicycles are stolen or vandalized. The City of El Cerrito is currently considering bicycle enclosures at both BART stations. The City has recently installed bicycle racks at intervals along San Pablo Avenue, with funding from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Pedestrian

A continuous and interconnected system of sidewalks is available throughout most of El Cerrito, although many major intersections lack striped crosswalks or curb cuts. One exception is the segment of Contra Costa Boulevard between Moeser Lane and Devonshire Drive, which lacks sidewalks (see Figure 11). One of the key pedestrian corridors in El Cerrito is San Pablo Avenue. San Pablo Avenue provides 10- to 20- foot sidewalks on both sides of the street throughout most of its length.

Based on the California Vehicle Code, even where no striped crosswalks are provided, pedestrians have the right to cross at all corners of intersections unless

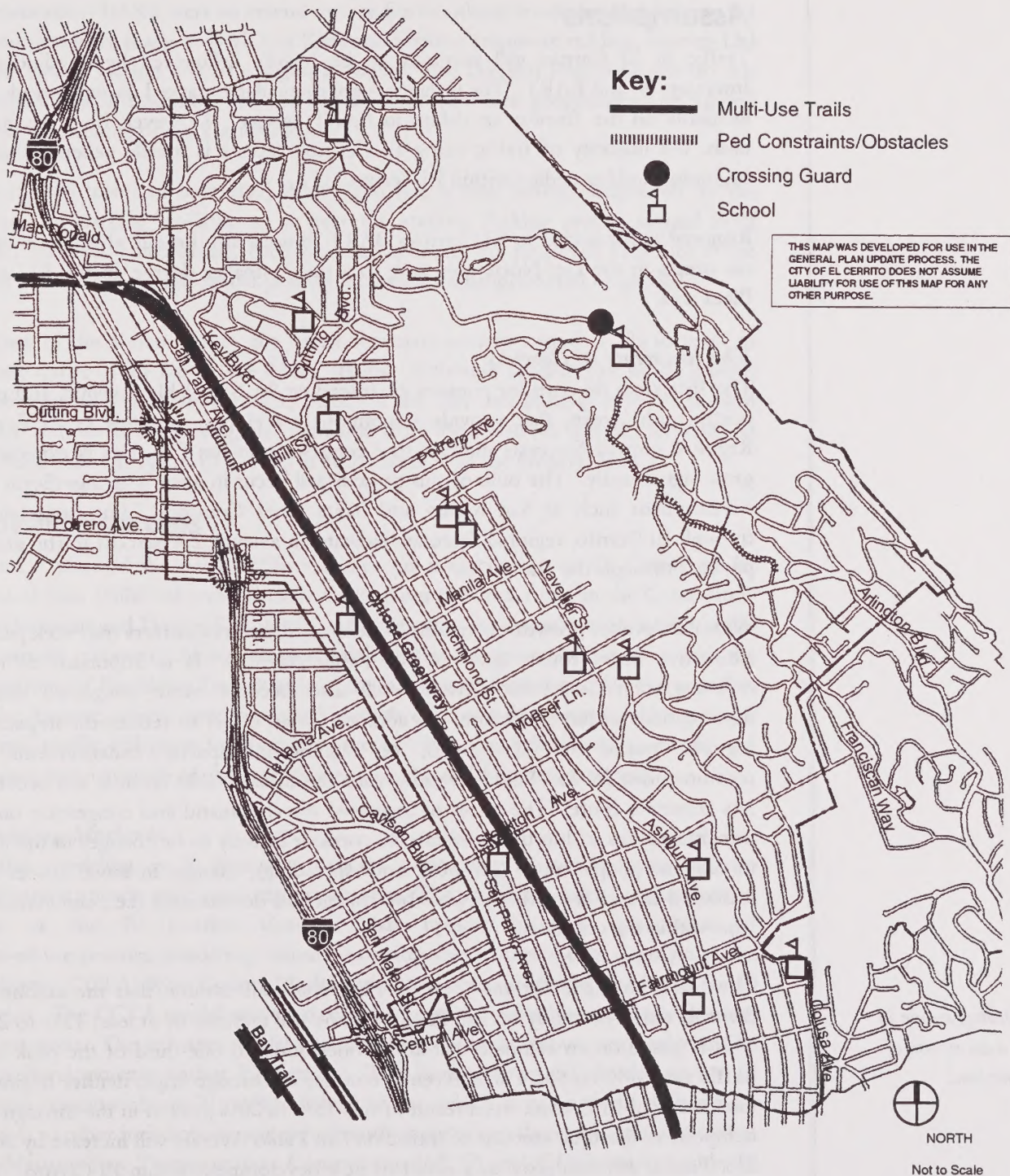
pedestrian traffic is explicitly prohibited with barriers and signs such as those installed at the intersection of San Pablo Avenue and Cutting Boulevard. When intersection approaches are uncontrolled or controlled by stop signs, pedestrians have the right-of-way (i.e., vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk).

Figure 11 identifies pedestrian obstacles in El Cerrito. Most of the pedestrian obstacles relate to inadequate pedestrian crosswalks. These occur near both BART stations; the primary problem is the lack of a signed and striped crosswalk. Areas lacking crosswalks are San Pablo Avenue between Cutting Boulevard and Hill Street, Hill Street east of San Pablo Avenue, and Fairmount Avenue between Liberty and Richmond Streets.

As is the case elsewhere in the East Bay Hills, the El Cerrito hill neighborhoods contain a number of narrow city-owned rights-of-way, which serve as mid-block paths running between private properties. The rights-of-way generally are five to fifteen feet in width. Some have been improved by the placement of asphalt or concrete pathways or steps. The majority, however, are unimproved. The city has not had the financial resources to improve the pathways that remain unimproved and those that are improved are not maintained on a regular basis. In some cases these open areas have been a subject of complaints from adjacent neighbors about trees and vegetation. On the other hand, improvement and maintenance of these public rights-of-way would enhance pedestrian enjoyment of the City.

Freeway interchanges also tend to provide limited pedestrian facilities, and, where free right turns are provided at on- and off-ramps, pedestrians must cross an uncontrolled stream of traffic. This occurs at the Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Carlson Boulevard interchanges. Although uncontrolled right turns do not exist at the Central Avenue Interchange, the number and length of street crossings required to get from the east side of Interstate 80 to the west side makes pedestrian travel uncomfortable.





Drawing prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc.

Figure 11 BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



B. Trends

Assumptions

Traffic in El Cerrito will continue to be heavily influenced by conditions on Interstate 80 and BART. The influences are particularly marked during periods with incidents on the freeway or delays in BART service. However, on a day-to-day basis, the majority of traffic using El Cerrito's streets is locally generated, either beginning and/or ending within El Cerrito.

Regional traffic access to El Cerrito's BART stations also heavily affects conditions on streets in the Del Norte area and, to a much smaller degree, in the El Cerrito Plaza area.

The Interstate 80 Corridor

The Interstate 80 corridor consists of Interstate 80, San Pablo Avenue, and other north-south streets that provide continuous travel opportunities in El Cerrito. Regional growth forecasts indicate that congestion in the Bay Area is expected to grow significantly. The bulk of this growth will occur in areas with significant new development such as San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. For Interstate 80 through El Cerrito, regional forecasts indicate an average 2.4 percent traffic growth per year through the year 2020.

With this level of growth on an already congested freeway, drivers may seek parallel alternative travel routes such as San Pablo Avenue. It is important to note, however, that San Pablo Avenue will also become more congested due to development within El Cerrito. In addition, in an effort to reduce the impacts of regional traffic on El Cerrito, no significant capacity enhancements are recommended for San Pablo Avenue. As a result, San Pablo Avenue will become a less attractive route. The result of increased travel demand and congestion on the principal routes within the Interstate 80 corridor is likely to be changes in the times of day that people travel (i.e., peak hour spreading), changes in travel modes (i.e., increased use of transit), and possibly changes in destinations (i.e., elimination of trips within the corridor).

The forecasts made for the General Plan build-out assume that the amount of through traffic currently on San Pablo Avenue will increase by at least 15% to 20%. This is based on an estimate that about one-fourth to one-third of the peak hour traffic presently on San Pablo Avenue consists of through trips, neither beginning nor ending in El Cerrito. As a result of this 15% to 20% growth in the through-trip component, the total amount of traffic on San Pablo Avenue will increase by about 5%. Traffic will also grow as a result of new development within El Cerrito. This traffic growth is estimated using a detailed traffic forecasting model, representing the potential changes in activity levels in over 20 different sub-sectors of the City. The locally-generated growth is added to adjusted background traffic. Combined, the effects of regional and local growth produce increases in San Pablo Avenue traffic of approximately 50%.

See Growth Strategy section in Chapter 4 for a description of build-out assumptions.

BART

El Cerrito transportation is also heavily influenced by BART and could change dramatically if BART were to extend service further along the Richmond Line or if a connection were made to BART in Richmond with a commute rail line, making Del Norte BART station less of a regional facility. The General Plan forecasts do not assume a BART extension because no extension has been programmed or funded within the lifetime of the General Plan.

Automobile travel to individual BART stations is also heavily influenced by the amount of parking available at or near the station. Parking supply around both BART stations is decreasing, even when considering the proposed structure at the Plaza station, and no additional parking increases are programmed or funded.

In view of the above factors, the traffic forecasts assume a modest 5% increase in vehicle traffic to the Del Norte BART station. Although modest, this traffic growth assumption is conservatively high, based on the fact that parking supplies at both BART stations is decreasing, and demands from local sources will be increasing as new land uses emerge in El Cerrito in accordance with the General Plan.

Travel Forecasts

Figure 7 showed the daily traffic volumes on major streets in El Cerrito under General Plan build-out conditions assuming land uses described in the Community Development and Design Chapter. Traffic on most residential streets in El Cerrito will remain constant. Along minor arterials, traffic will grow by 5 to 10%, with the exceptions of Eastshore Boulevard and the portion of Fairmount Avenue near San Pablo Avenue, which have projected growth of about 65 percent. Along major arterial, traffic will grow by 30 to 50 percent. For San Pablo Avenue, traffic will increase by an average of about 50 percent, or about 2.5 percent per year.

Modeling Methods

Traffic modeling is a four-step process consisting of trip generation, trip distribution, mode split, and trip assignment. The modeling effort undertaken as part of the El Cerrito General Plan update includes application of state-of-the-practice modeling techniques using the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) West County Model and a local-area sub-model developed for El Cerrito. The CCTA model was used to derive regional growth and trip distribution assumptions. The sub-area model was used to generate, distribute and assign traffic from developments within El Cerrito. The local area model developed for El Cerrito contains about 20 traffic analysis zones, which is more detail than similar models in other jurisdictions and significantly more zones than are contained within the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) or CCTA models within El Cerrito. The local area model was also validated against highly sophisticated models like the CCTA and MTC models, through the series of reasonableness checks described below.

Reasonableness Checks

With all modeling efforts, it is essential that model results be reviewed for reasonableness. For the El Cerrito model, reasonableness checks included comparisons of projected growth with: (1) historic growth trends, (2) the CCTA model, (3) the MTC model, and (4) the El Cerrito Evaluation of Interstate 80 Expansion of Traffic Impact.

- Historic Growth Trends - Over the last 15 years, traffic forecasts on San Pablo Avenue have increased about 0.8 percent per year. (California Department of Transportation, Volumes on California State Highways, 1980, 1990, and 1995)
- CCTA Model - The CCTA model predicts a 1.5-percent per year increase in daily traffic and negligible PM peak hour traffic growth. (West Contra Costa County Action Plan for Routes of Regional Significance, December 4, 1994)
- MTC Model - The MTC predicts a growth rate of less than one percent per year. (Metropolitan Transportation Commission Regional Model Loaded AM Peak Hour Networks for 1990, 2005, and 2015, February 9, 1994 and September 3, 1996)
- El Cerrito Evaluation of Interstate 80 Expansion of Traffic Impact (October 11, 1995) - The subject study was prepared for the City and MTC in anticipation of the Interstate 80 reconstruction project. It predicts a reduction in San Pablo Avenue traffic levels between 1990 and 2000 due to expansion of Interstate 80 and a modest increase between 2000 and 2010, with the net result that 2010 traffic volumes would be similar to or even slightly lower than 1995 volumes.

It is important to note, that each of the above references reports traffic growth from all sources, including growth and shifts in through traffic and locally generated traffic. Therefore, the range of estimates from these references is a growth rate in total traffic on San Pablo Avenue of 1.5% a year or less. By comparison the El Cerrito General Plan build-out projected a growth rate of 2.5 percent per year. As these reasonableness checks indicate, the General Plan forecast is a worst-case assessment of potential traffic conditions.

Although the General Plan forecasts, under worst-case assumptions, considerable traffic growth on El Cerrito arterials, most arterials will have sufficient capacity to accommodate expected traffic growth, but delays can be expected to increase significantly throughout the City. Specific spot improvements required to facilitate acceptable traffic flow are described in the next section. Improvements are specified in a manner that attempts to promote a balance among the competing access and mobility needs of the community. This balance will allow worse traffic congestion on the cities arterials, as long as they: 1) do not violate the City's Level of Service standards, 2) provide a closer balance between congestion on the freeway

and congestion on the parallel arterial to discourage traffic diversions from the freeway, and 3) maintain street widths and pedestrian crossing distances at levels that promote walking, bicycling and transit use, rather than placing the primary emphasis on facilitating traffic flow.

Traffic Operations

The projections indicate that most intersections in El Cerrito will continue to operate at LOS C or better in the future. Around El Cerrito Plaza, the intersections of San Pablo and Central avenues and San Pablo and Fairmount avenues will deteriorate to LOS D, but will still operate acceptably. Three intersections will deteriorate to LOS E or worse and will require improvements. The intersections and improvements necessary to attain LOS D or better are described below.

- San Pablo Avenue/Knott Avenue, which is controlled by stop signs on the Knott Avenue approaches, will operate at LOS F under General Plan build-out conditions. Signalization of the intersection would improve its operation to LOS C.
- San Pablo Avenue/Hill Street/Eastshore Boulevard, which is a signalized intersection with five intersection approaches, is projected to deteriorate to LOS E conditions under General Plan build-out conditions. The addition of an exclusive southbound right-turn lane on San Pablo Avenue to Eastshore Boulevard, an exclusive westbound left-turn lane on Hill Street to San Pablo Avenue, and a second exclusive eastbound left-turn lane from Eastshore Boulevard to San Pablo Avenue would improve this intersection to LOS D.
- Key Boulevard/Cutting Boulevard, which is controlled by all-way stop signs, will operate at LOS E under General Plan build-out conditions. The addition of a southbound right-turn lane on Key Boulevard will improve the intersection's operations to LOS C.

These improvements are not currently programmed or funded but would likely be made in combination with development of adjacent and surrounding properties.

Although planning-level service level calculations indicate that the Central Avenue interchange with I-80 will operate acceptably under future conditions, due to severe operational constraints including close intersection spacing and multiple approach lanes and changes in area freeway ramp configurations, a more detailed review of traffic operations at this interchange is recommended.

C. Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies have been formulated in response to issues raised throughout the General Plan public input process. Throughout the goals and policies, the terms *circulation* and *transportation* refer to the movement of people by all modes of travel.

Goal T1: A transportation system that allows safe and efficient travel by a variety of modes and promotes the use of alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle.

Policies	Implementation Measures
T1.1 Balanced Transportation System. Create and maintain a balanced transportation system with choice of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and private automobile modes.	• Transportation System Performance Measures • Travel Demand Management • Bicycle Master Plan • Pedestrian Circulation Plan • Development Review • Traffic Monitoring
T1.2 Transit System. Encourage transit providers to improve and increase existing transit routes, frequency, and level of service. Encourage a public transit system that provides convenient transfers between transit services and other modes of travel.	• Intergovernmental Coordination • Transit First Policy
T1.3 Bicycle Circulation. Create a complete, interconnected bicycle circulation system. Provide a bicycle system that serves commuter as well as recreational travel. Improve bicycle routes and access to and between major destinations.	• Bicycle Master Plan • Pavement Management Plan
T1.4 Pedestrian Circulation. Provide a safe, convenient, continuous and interconnected pedestrian circulation system throughout the City. Ensure safe pedestrian access to local schools.	• Pedestrian Circulation Plan

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| T1.5 | Goods Movement. Maintain a transportation system that provides truck mobility to serve all land uses in El Cerrito. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation Map • Development Review |
| T1.6 | Emergency Services. Maintain and improve critical transportation facilities for emergency vehicle access and emergency evacuation needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation Map • Development Review |
| T1.7 | Regional Coordination. Recognize El Cerrito's role in the region and lead in regional efforts to increase transit and reduce congestion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination |

Goal T2: A land use pattern that encourages walking, bicycling, and public transit use.

Policies

Implementation Measures

*Also see Land Use Policies
LU5.1 through LU5.6.*

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <p>T2.1</p> | <p>Land Use Patterns. Recognize the link between land use and transportation. Promote land use and development patterns that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. Emphasize high-density and mixed land use patterns that promote transit and pedestrian travel. Where feasible, emphasize the following land use measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote conveniently located neighborhood complexes that provide housing and commercial services near employment centers and within transit corridors. 2. Promote land use patterns that maximize trip-linking opportunities by assembling uses that allow people to take care of a variety of daily needs. 3. Encourage pedestrian-oriented land use and urban design that can have a demonstrable effect on transportation choices. 4. Direct growth to occur along transit corridors. 5. Encourage retail, commercial, and office uses in ground floor space in combination with upper-floor housing along San Pablo Avenue. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review |
| <p>T2.2</p> | <p>Project Design. Projects should be designed to include features that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Transit First Policy |

*Also see Land Use Policies
LU5.5 and LU6.2 and
Community Design Policies
CD2.4 through CD2.8.*

Goal T3: A transportation system, including safe and adequate streets, signals, sidewalks, pathways, curbs, gutters, street trees, signage, and streetlights, that maintains and improves the livability of the City.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- | | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| T3.1 | Improve Circulation. Improve circulation in locations with high levels of congestion, but avoid major increases in street capacities unless necessary to remedy severe traffic congestion, and not at the expense of pedestrian circulation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital Improvement Program ● Development Review ● Traffic Monitoring |
| T3.2 | Streets as Public Spaces. Recognize the role of streets not only as vehicle routes but also as part of an extensive system of public spaces where people live, city residents meet, and businesses reside. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Streetscape Design Standards |
| T3.3 | Residential Streets. To discourage cut-through traffic on residential streets, maintain the existing system of arterial and collector streets. Where necessary, employ traffic management techniques to control the speed of vehicles traveling on residential streets, including residential portions of arterial and collector streets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan ● Preference for Cut-through Streets |
| T3.4 | Street Closures. Keep all neighborhood streets open unless there is an existing or potential safety or cut-through traffic problem and there are no acceptable alternatives, or unless the closure would increase the use of alternative transportation modes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Circulation Map |
| T3.5 | Street Maintenance. Provide high-quality, regular maintenance for existing and future transportation facilities, including streets and dedicated bicycle paths. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pavement Management Plan |
| T3.6 | Maintenance of San Pablo. Coordinate with Caltrans to ensure the timely maintenance of San Pablo Avenue. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intergovernmental Coordination |

Goal T4: A minimum amount of land used for parking and minimal parking intrusion in neighborhoods.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>T4.1 Parking Requirements. Develop parking requirements that are consistent with the goals for increased use of alternative transportation modes, and acknowledge shared parking opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Parking Regulations |
| <p>T4.2 Underparked Areas of San Pablo Avenue. Evaluate long-term parking needs along San Pablo Avenue and promote the development of common parking facilities in areas where existing and long-term parking provisions will not satisfy latent parking demand.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking Management Plan • Parking Regulations • Development Review |
| <p>T4.3 BART Parking. Support decreasing the amount of land dedicated to parking around BART stations by using parking structures. To reduce parking demand at BART stations, encourage an improved transit feeder system to BART stations including consideration of new transit technologies. Encourage BART parking not to obstruct pedestrian access from stations to surrounding land uses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination • Parking Regulations |
| <p>T4.4 Residential Parking Permits. Maintain the restrictive residential permit-parking program for neighborhoods surrounding BART stations. As need arises, expand the permit parking areas or create new permit parking areas to protect neighborhoods from parking intrusion from adjacent land uses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Permit Parking Program |

D. Implementation

Implementation measures below are listed in alphabetical order.

1. **Bicycle Master Plan.** Prepare a comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan that complies with the 13 elements outlined in the California Bicycle Lane Account (BLA). The Bicycle Master Plan should include an active public input process to develop a comprehensive bicycle circulation and support facilities system; design standards for bicycle facilities; standards for the provision of bicycle support facilities; evaluation of current bicycle education and promotion programs in El Cerrito; analysis of bicycle accidents in El Cerrito; and a capital improvement program. The Bicycle Master Plan should encourage local access to the BART stations by bicycling as an alternative to short-distance driving. Develop a strategic approach to pursuing state and federal funding for bicycle projects, working closely with surrounding jurisdictions and Contra Costa County. Work with the City of Richmond to provide a clear connection between the Ohlone Greenway and the planned Richmond Greenway.
2. **Capital Improvement Program.** Ensure that adequate funding is available to implement transportation improvements required to mitigate the effects of growth.
3. **Circulation Map.** Use the circulation map in the General Plan to guide activities related to goods movement, emergency routes, and street closures.
4. **Development Review.** Undertake development reviews to ensure compliance with applicable local, regional, state, and federal laws and adopted policies. Ensure that developers contribute funding for on-site and off-site improvements. Adopt an ordinance requiring developers to do the following:
 - a. Construct transportation improvements along their property frontages when appropriate; and
 - b. Fund traffic impact studies that identify on-site and off-site effects and mitigation measures.
5. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Contra Costa County, AC Transit, BART, Caltrans, and other applicable agencies. The Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA) West County Action Plan for Routes of Regional Significance (12/9/94) defines a regional vision for Hercules, Pinole, San Pablo, Richmond, and El Cerrito. This document defines many of the City's positions with respect to regional transportation improvements. Some of the key Action Plan items are:
 - a. Support inclusion of the West County BART extension in the MTC Track 2 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) project lists.
 - b. Pursue every opportunity to speed the funding and construction of the West

- c. Expand efforts urging MTC to determine the best express transit system(s) for the Interstate 80 corridor and, based on the results of the MTC study, encourage timely implementation of planned transit capital and service improvements.
- d. Promote Carquinez Bridge alternatives that will achieve mainline metering of Interstate 80 into West Contra Costa County.
- e. Support efforts by Caltrans, CCTA, and MTC to tailor capacity of the Carquinez Bridge improvements to downstream capacity.
- f. Support efforts by AC Transit to study the feasibility of bus rapid transit treatments along San Pablo Avenue.
- g. Support mixed-use development, high employment commercial, and higher-density residential development in transit corridors and near BART stations.
- h. Consider additional transit mitigation alternatives, as appropriate, in future Action Plan Deficiency Strategies.

In addition to, and in support of, these regional key items, the following are City of El Cerrito interagency coordination positions:

- a. As opportunities present themselves, improve freeway access to El Cerrito, particularly around the Del Norte area and at the Central Avenue interchange.
- b. Oppose transportation projects that would diminish access to Interstate 80 from El Cerrito.
- c. Oppose regional capacity enhancements to San Pablo Avenue except when the improvements serve local traffic and do not compromise bus, pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- d. Support physical enhancements to San Pablo Avenue to make it a transit and pedestrian friendly multi-modal street.
- e. Encourage the City of Richmond and Caltrans to conduct a detailed operations analysis of the Central Avenue interchange and be an active participant in this study. This study should address an existing base year condition as well as a 20-year growth forecast including expected growth from development in El Cerrito, Richmond and Albany. It should also address weekday and Saturday conditions. It should be conducted using a detailed operations analysis such as Synchro and/or CORSIM.

6. **Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan.** Develop a Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) to respond to problems in a consistent and methodical way. The NTMP should have a strong citizen participation element so that residents can evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of various measures and be actively involved in the decision-making process. Develop a standard procedure for residents to initiate a local NTMP and provide a handbook describing the process and specific steps. At a minimum, the handbook should define the standard procedure, type of data collection, toolbox of potential traffic calming measures, prioritization methodology, and funding mechanism(s). Ensure that the process is vigorously maintained and administered by City staff at all levels.
7. **Parking Management Plan.** Conduct an evaluation of long-term parking needs in commercial areas with current or anticipated parking shortages. Investigate the feasibility of developing common off-street parking facilities in target areas. Consider various funding sources for new parking facilities including in-lieu fees for development projects, redevelopment money, and formation of parking assessment districts.
8. **Parking Regulations.** Develop parking requirements that permit projects to provide less parking if they can demonstrate high use of alternative transportation modes. Specify maximum and minimum parking ratios. Allow a reduction in the individual use parking requirements where two or more non-residential uses provide joint parking, and encourage developers of compatible land uses to provide joint parking facilities. Encourage developers to locate parking lots to the rear or sides of buildings, except where infeasible, to prevent lots from becoming barriers to walking.
9. **Pavement Management Plan.** Maintain a systematic pavement management program and identify and prioritize maintenance projects in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Street maintenance should also include maintenance and regular cleaning of bicycle routes to remove debris and poor pavement conditions that discourage bicycle riding. The Pavement Management Plan should also address signage and pavement on the Ohlone Greenway.
10. **Pedestrian Circulation Plan.** Review existing pedestrian circulation within the City to identify constraints to walking, develop improvement plans at constrained locations (including pedestrian street crossings), and incorporate pedestrian enhancement projects into the City Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Encourage local access to BART stations by walking as an alternative to short-distance driving. Develop new sidewalk width standards consistent with the type and intensity of adjacent land use. Attention should be paid to the issue of tree damage to sidewalks and obstruction of sidewalks by signs. When constructing or modifying sidewalks:
 - a. Maintain accessibility for all users.

- b. Within commercial, office, and mixed-use areas, provide or improve sidewalk pedestrian amenities, such as seating, bicycle parking, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, flower boxes, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, and awnings. In many cases, this may be in combination with the development of adjacent properties.
- c. Systematically inspect and maintain sidewalk facilities to clean and repair damaged surfaces and remove or relocate impediments, such as poles and newspaper racks that interfere with pedestrian flow.
- d. Build at sufficient width to allow at least two people to walk side-by-side. Make sidewalk widths in commercial areas more generous.
- e. Where possible, channel or guide pedestrian traffic along sidewalks to increase commercial opportunities.

As part of a pedestrian circulation plan the City should examine the value for pedestrians of mid-block paths in the hills, and should identify improvements needed to make them safe and effective routes, as well as identify an ongoing maintenance program. The City should consider for abandonment paths that could not affordably and effectively function as part of the pedestrian circulation system.

- 11. **Preference for Cut-through Streets.** In conjunction with the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan, neighborhoods along residential streets which bear cut-through traffic (as measured by up-to-date traffic data) should be given priority for neighborhood improvements to compensate for the effects of traffic. In addition to traffic management techniques, such improvements might include amenities such as street tree planting and utility undergrounding.
- 12. **Residential Permit Parking Program.** Maintain the City's current residential permit parking program. Develop a standard procedure for evaluating permit parking requests and implementing residential permit parking.
- 13. **Streetscape Design Standards.** Develop street typologies (residential street, commercial main street, boulevard, etc.) with design standards to protect the role of the street as a public space.
- 14. **Traffic Monitoring.** Ensure regular monitoring of traffic levels and intersection capacity to update base data and respond to changing conditions.
- 15. **Transit First Policy.** It is the official policy of the City of El Cerrito to encourage and promote the use of public transit among El Cerrito residents and visitors, and expedite the movement of transit vehicles. The City has directed the Planning Commission, the Design Review Board and the Community Development Department to consider and incorporate various methods of expediting transit service and encouraging greater use of transit. Some of the specific methods for accomplishing these goals are:
 - a. Evaluation of automobile turning movements that conflict with transit vehicles;

- b. Consideration of transit preemption;
- c. Evaluation and optimization of bus stop locations, designs and maintenance; and
- d. Provision of improvements to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops.

16. **Transportation System Performance Measures.** Develop a level-of-service standard for traffic operations that assesses service levels for all street users, including buses, pedestrians, and bicycles. Consider modifying the City's current LOS D standard to allow for higher levels of automobile congestion during peak hours in order to reduce the need for improvements that decrease opportunities for alternative transportation modes or reduce parking supply.

Using a level of service standard worse than LOS D maybe considered acceptable where:

- a. Upstream or downstream bottlenecks control the flow of traffic through an intersection such that capacity enhancements (i.e., improvements) would have marginal benefit;
- b. Retaining a bottleneck would discourage regional or semi-regional traffic from using a facility; or
- c. Traffic capacity enhancements would degrade pedestrian, transit or bicycle conditions (i.e., additional lanes increases pedestrian crossing distances).

In order to maintain consistency with the Congestion Management Plan, LOS E is the worst level of service standard that could be adopted for San Pablo Avenue.

17. **Travel Demand Management (TDM).** Support and promote TDM measures to reduce the percentage of person trips made by automobile and to reduce the annual vehicle miles of travel. Reduce the percentage of trips made by automobile and provide the opportunity and facilities to divert trips from automobiles to other modes. Encourage small businesses in areas of employment concentration to form cooperatives that can collectively provide effective TDM options to employees.



Chapter 6 Public Facilities and Services

CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public services and facilities – including basic utilities and infrastructure – must be considered in the planning process in order to identify potential opportunities and constraints for new development. Public service and facility issues relate to several of the state’s mandatory general plan elements, including Safety, Conservation, Open Space, and Land Use. Since there is a direct relationship between the City’s ability to provide community services and the public facilities available in the community, it is appropriate that public facility and public service policies and goals be included in the General Plan.

The Public Facilities and Services element includes those services, facilities, and capital improvements needed to service the entire community, including the City Hall, police and fire facilities, and parks. A range of services and facilities, including schools and libraries, are provided to El Cerrito residents by other service providers. The City works with the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), Contra Costa County, and other service providers to maintain service to current and future residents and employees.

Specific public facility and service needs, goals, and policies are addressed in the following subsections:

- Parks and Recreation
- Non-Recreational Facilities
- Public Services and Infrastructure

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

A. Setting

El Cerrito is blessed with many fine parks, major open space areas, several creeks, and easy access to the regional park system. Residents of the City enjoy a rich diversity of parks and recreational opportunities, including a variety of City-operated recreational programs (including childcare programs) and City-maintained parks and recreation facilities. While program fees have helped cover basic service costs, however, growing demand for these services and the age of many recreation facilities (mostly built in the 1950s and 1960s) have resulted in a growing list of deferred facility capital improvement needs.

Existing Facilities

Park and open space facilities in El Cerrito include approximately 31.6 acres of City-owned parks, 99.9 acres of City-owned open space, 23.3 acres of other City-maintained recreational facilities, and 26.6 acres of school district owned and maintained recreational areas for a total of approximately 181.4 acres of publicly owned recreation and open space facilities (**Table 6-1**). The amount of City-owned open space includes approximately 2.9 acres in two areas not previously designated for recreation or open space, but so designated by this Plan. These figures do not include two significant creek areas – Cerrito Creek at El Cerrito Plaza and Baxter Creek near Key Boulevard – that total approximately 2.6 acres, which may be secured through easements rather than fee title.



Table 6-1. Inventory of Parks, Recreation Lands, and Open Space

City-owned Parks		Utility-owned (Public or Private) Open Space Areas	
Arlington Park	5.2	RG&E Right of Way	22.0
Canyon Trail Park	7.4	EBMUD Reservoir Sites	11.2
Canyon Trail Field	3.1		
Central Park (El Cerrito portion)	0.2		
Cerrito Vista Park	7.6		
Creekside Park	1.5		
Huber Park	2.6		
Poinsett Park	1.1		
Tassajara Park	2.9		
Subtotal	31.6	Subtotal	33.2
City-owned "Open Space" Facilities		Privately-owned Open Space Areas	
Hillside Natural Area	85.0	Mira Vista Country Club	127.1
Ohlone Greenway (City portion)	12.0	Camp Herms Scout Camp	18.0
City-owned land not previously dedicated to recreation or open space*	2.9	Sunset View Cemetery	7.1
Subtotal	99.9	Windrush School	1.3
Other City-maintained Recreation Facilities		Residential (sites designated as open space in the General Plan)	
		• North side of Moeser @ Seaview	2.8
Castro Park	2.7	• West end of Buckingham Drive	8.2
Fairmont Park	3.6		
Harding Park	3.5		
Central Park (Richmond portion)	1.5		
Ohlone Greenway (BART portion)	12.0		
Subtotal	23.3	Subtotal	164.5
School District-owned & Maintained Recreation Area		Newly added Open Space Included in this General Plan	
Cougar Field (Albany USD)	7.6	Creek areas (exact locations and ownership not determined)	1.8**
El Cerrito High (West County USD)	15.0		0.8**
Portola Middle (West County USD)	5.0	• Cerrito Creek @ El Cerrito Plaza	
Subtotal	26.6	• Baxter Creek near Key Blvd.	
		Subtotal	2.6
Total Publicly Owned Recreation & Open Space Facilities	181.4	Total Other Open Space	200.3

* Lots on north side of Roger Court and area on south side of Moeser Lane @ Seaview

** Estimates

Source: City of El Cerrito staff, July 1999

Recreation Facilities

The City's Community Services Division provides facilities and programs that serve the broader needs of the entire community (**Table 6-2**) as well as facilities that serve local neighborhoods (**Table 6-3**). The City also leases City-owned buildings for uses such as the Contra Costa Civic Theater. Also, all the public and most of the private schools in El Cerrito have facilities available for community groups to use for recreation or meetings. Six of the neighborhood parks have clubhouses for City recreation programs and community group uses.

**Table 6-2. Community-Serving Parks and Recreation Facilities
(including public use facilities not owned by the city)**

Facility	Location
Casa Cerrito Childcare Center <i>play area, equipment</i>	6927 Portola Drive
Cerrito Vista Park (7.6 acres) <i>2 tennis courts, 4 softball fields, volleyball court, picnic facilities, play equipment</i>	7300 Moeser Lane
El Cerrito Community Center/Swim Center Complex	7007 Moeser Lane
El Cerrito Tennis Center (El Cerrito High)	540 Ashbury
Ohlone Greenway (2.5 miles long) <i>("linear park" along the BART right-of-way, maintained by the city)</i>	On and parallel to BART right-of-way
Hillside Natural Area (85 acres) <i>Memorial Grove, Hillside Trail, Eucalyptus Grove, Quarry</i>	Hill areas (see Community Facilities Map)
Cougar Field <i>(owned and operated by the Albany Unified School District)</i>	On El Cerrito/Albany border West of Behrens Street
El Cerrito High School (approx. 14 acres for recreation) <i>5 tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, outdoor basketball courts, gymnasium, football field, baseball area, jogging track</i>	540 Ashbury Avenue
Portola Middle School (approx. 5 acres for recreation) <i>Playground and gym</i>	1021 Navellier Street
Veterans Hall (Contra Costa County)	6401 Stockton Avenue
"Open House" Senior Center	6500 Stockton Avenue
Contra Costa Civic Theater	Moeser at Pomona
Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp (private)	Above Arlington Park off Thors Bay Road
Mira Vista Country Club (private)	Northeastern portion of city, above Arlington Blvd.
Windrush School (Independent) <i>Gymnasium available for rent by city and others</i>	1800 Elm Street

Source: Draft Community Services Element of the El Cerrito General Plan, October 1986; supplemented by input from City of El Cerrito staff, May 1998 and March 1999.

**Table 6-3. Neighborhood-Serving Parks and Recreation Facilities
(including public use facilities not owned by the city)**

Facility	Location
Arlington Park (5.2 acres) <i>Clubhouse, 2 ponds, 3 tennis courts, picnic facilities, basketball court, play equipment, grass play area, creek access</i>	1120 Arlington Boulevard
Canyon Trail Park (10.5 acres) <i>2 tennis courts, clubhouse,* play equipment, grass play area, large natural area in canyon with small pond, creek access, picnic facilities; includes former El Monte playfield with baseball diamond and soccer field</i>	6757 Gatto
Castro Elementary School <i>Playground</i>	7123 Donal Avenue
Castro Park (2.7 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, 2 tennis courts, baseball field, playground, play equipment</i>	1420 Norvell Street
Central Park (1.7 acres) (located mostly in Richmond but jointly maintained by El Cerrito) <i>softball field, basketball area, play equipment</i>	5701 Central Avenue
Creekside Park (1.5 acres) <i>play equipment, lawn areas</i>	South end of Santa Clara Avenue
Fairmont Elementary School <i>Playground, basketball courts</i>	724 Kearney Street
Fairmont Park (3.6 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, play equipment, small softball field</i>	715 Lexington
Harding Elementary School <i>Playground, basketball courts</i>	7230 Fairmount Avenue
Harding Park (3.5 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, 2 tennis courts, baseball field, playground, play equipment, picnic facilities</i>	7115 C Street
Huber Park (2.6 acres) <i>Small clubhouse,** play equipment, basketball court, picnic and barbecue facilities, creek access</i>	7711 Terrace
Madera Elementary School <i>Playground</i>	8500 Madera Drive
Madera Childcare Center <i>Childcare center, play equipment</i>	1500 Devonshire Drive
Poinsett Park (1.1 acres) <i>Small clubhouse, play area, basketball area, open creek</i>	5611 Poinsett Drive
Sierra Prospect Elementary School (Independent) <i>Play area and equipment</i>	2060 Tapscott Avenue
St. John's School (Independent) <i>Playground, gym</i>	11156 San Pablo Avenue
Tassajara Park (2.9 acres) <i>Clubhouse/ceramics studio, 2 tennis courts, small ballfield, playground, picnic facilities, basketball courts</i>	2575 Tassajara Avenue
Tehiyah Day School (Independent) <i>Playground, play equipment</i>	2603 Tassajara Avenue

* not currently in use due to building settlement

** limited use due to lack of accessibility

Source: Draft Community Services Element of the El Cerrito General Plan, October 1986, supplemented by input from City of El Cerrito staff, May 1998 and March 1999.

In addition to City facilities, El Cerritans benefit from close proximity to major regional recreation facilities operated by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). These facilities include Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, located just east of El Cerrito; Point Isabel Regional Shoreline, located west of El Cerrito; and Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, located west of El Cerrito.

Recreation Programs

The City also operates a wide range of recreation programs:

- **Adult Recreation Programs.** This includes programs and classes covering a range of activities and topics. The programs serve 400 to 500 people per week and are paid for by class fees. The department also organizes and supervises men's and women's softball leagues each summer.
- **Senior Center.** The City leases the "Open House" Senior Center from the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The center is located at 6500 Stockton Avenue, near the City library, and includes a dining area, lounge, and meeting rooms. The facility accommodates social activities such as dances, classes, crafts, and meetings. It also houses programs available to older residents, including daily lunch, home-delivered meals, grocery shopping, adult day care program, equipment loans for disabled persons, counseling, and senior discount card services. The center is funded by participants, private donations and the general fund, and serves between 800 and 1,000 seniors per week. The center also handles a discount paratransit voucher program and special van trips for seniors and disabled riders, with funds received from Measure C.
- **Youth Services.** The City provides childcare (for children 5 to 12 years), pre-school programs (20 months to 5 years), and summer day camps (3.5 to 15 years). Childcare is provided in state-licensed centers adjacent to each of the four public elementary schools in El Cerrito. In addition, the City provides an offsite childcare center and transportation from schools for children on the waiting list for the onsite centers. Over 1,500 youth participate in these programs.
- **After-School Programs.** Middle school students are served by free after-school enrichment programs funded by the West County Public Education Fund and delivered by staff of the City's Community Services Department. This program serves 200 Portola Middle School students.
- **Youth Recreation Programs.** Fee-based classes and activities are provided by independent contractors for youth aged 3 to 18 years. These programs serve 250 to 350 young people per month.
- **Jobs and Volunteer Positions.** Youths aged 12 to 18 are encouraged to participate in division activities as volunteers and counselors for younger children.
- **Swim Programs.** The El Cerrito Swim Center houses programs (classes, lap swims, swim teams, etc.) that serve more than 2,000 swimmers each year.

The City's Community Services Division also coordinates a number of community events and fundraisers each year such as the Golf Scramble, July Fourth Celebration (sponsored by the El Cerrito Rotary and co-sponsored by the City), and Annual Egg Hunt. The Division also works to provide support for community-based groups such as the Tennis Club, Garden Club, and NAACP Youth Group.

Many community facilities are available for rental to groups, including the Community Center, Senior Center, clubhouses, Swim Center, and picnic facilities.

Open Space

El Cerrito is blessed with many fine parks, major open space areas, several creeks, and easy access to the regional park system. The western portion of the City is built on an extension of the San Francisco Bay Plain. The eastern half of the City extends into the Berkeley Hills, with the ridgetop lying near the eastern City Limits. Although these west-facing slopes are gentler than the east-facing slopes in Wildcat Canyon, El Cerrito contains some very steep areas.

The City of El Cerrito has substantial open space and natural resources under various forms of ownership. The City itself has large holdings, while other parcels are under the stewardship of various public and non-profit agencies as well as private landowners. The Hillside Natural Area (HNA), which is a 165-acre open space area, is located east of Navellier Street and west of Contra Costa Drive. The HNA has a number of trails that are used for both recreation and emergency access. The largest portion of the area is centrally located, and contains a number of woodlands, grasslands, and fuel breaks, and surrounds an old quarry. In addition, there is a significant amount of undeveloped property adjacent to the HNA, owned by a number of private individuals (zoned residential), and other lands which are used by public entities including: EBMUD, PG&E, City of El Cerrito, and Stege Sanitary District.

The City's tree-covered hillsides, creeks, the west facing slopes of the Berkeley Hills, and the approximately 2,600 acre Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, which is contiguous with two-thirds of the City's eastern boundary, are important resources to preserve and enhance. Other open space resources include: (1) the Mira Vista Country Club, a 110-acre parcel, zoned for open space use, but privately owned by the Mira Vista Country Club – it contains a golf course, and the main building/clubhouse; (2) Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp, which is an 18-acre parcel, zoned for open space use, which is privately owned by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and used as a camp; and (3) the Sunset View Cemetery, which comprises a total of about 60 acres, with a small portion of the cemetery (6 acres) within the bounds of the city and zoned for open space use.

Open space serves several purposes: (1) preservation of certain natural resources, such as habitats and watersheds; (2) protection of lands used for the managed production of resources, such as timber and crops; (3) provision of outdoor recreation, such as parks and trails; and (4) protection of public health and safety, such as lands subject to unstable soils or flooding. The same open space parcel may serve several of these purposes. This General Plan includes the primary discussion of open space in this chapter because of its close connection to parks and recreation uses. Specific aspects of open space that relate to preservation of natural resources or protection of public health and safety are discussed in Chapter 7.



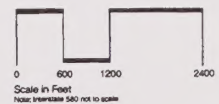
Key:

-  City-Owned Parks
-  City-Owned Open Space Facilities
-  Other City-Maintained Recreation Facilities
-  School District Owned/Maintained Recreation Areas
-  Utility-Owned (Public or Private) Open Space Areas
-  Privately-Owned Open Space Areas
-  Jointly-Owned Ohlone Greenway: City/BART

THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS. THE CITY OF EL CERRITO DOES NOT ASSUME LIABILITY FOR USE OF THIS MAP FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.



NORTH



Drawing prepared by MIG, Inc. 800 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94710

Figure 12 OPEN SPACE PLAN

Also see section entitled "Urban Service Performance Standards" in the Growth Management portion of Chapter 4.

Level of Service Standards

Prior to adoption of this updated General Plan, El Cerrito did not adopt park standards similar to those established by nationally recognized organizations, such as the National Recreation and Parks Association. Instead, the City modified the 1975 General Plan to include a Community Services Element that laid out a detailed activity program for every neighborhood park, each citywide recreation center, and each specialized open space facility. In each instance, service standards and programs were based on an evaluation of the limiting effects of geography, distribution of age groups, and availability of complementary facilities (i.e., school grounds and parks in adjoining cities). This approach worked well in the past, but a new system is easier to implement and monitor. Many other cities, including some that are subject to Contra Costa County Measure C, have adopted a commonly used level of service standard of five acres of park and recreation facilities per thousand. Adoption of this standard would allow some residential growth in El Cerrito without having to acquire more land for parks.

B. Trends

The trend in El Cerrito, as well as in other cities in California, is an increasing demand for more and better recreation facilities, especially sports fields. These demands should be taken seriously because recreation facilities contribute to the quality of life and economic well being of the City.

Several key issues of concern over the coming years relate to maintenance costs and acquisition of open space.

1. *Open Space Maintenance Costs.* Maintenance costs for any City-owned open space would include fire prevention, weed control, litter and safety patrol, and cleaning of drains and culverts. Facilities such as restrooms, playgrounds, and game courts involve additional maintenance costs. Liability for fire, landslides, flooding and injuries is another operational cost. Long-term expenses need to be considered when priorities are set for acquiring land and developing recreational facilities.
2. *Open Space Acquisition Methods.* The type of acquisition that is appropriate for a given parcel depends on the location, physical characteristics, designation and intended use of the land. If the parcel's value is its visual amenity, then a scenic easement would be sufficient. If the only reason to keep a parcel in open space is to avoid hazards, the existing open space designation would serve this purpose. To preserve habitat in areas already designated open space, all that is needed is to maintain the designation.
3. *Open Space Alternatives.* Although recreational uses generally require more than a designation or granting of an easement, fee ownership by the City may not always be necessary. A neighborhood park for a new development could be set aside as a dedication to a neighborhood association, which could maintain it. Play areas can be developed in cooperation with schools. Regional acquisitions can provide connections in regional trail corridors. Access easements can provide passageways to "landlocked" parcels.

While program fees have helped cover basic recreation service costs, growing demand for park and recreation services and the age of many facilities (mostly built in the 1950s and 1960s) have resulted in a growing list of deferred facility capital improvement needs. These needs include replacement of play equipment, turf renovation, replacement of irrigation systems, large-scale replacement of fencing and large backstops, and replacement or refurbishing of steps, bleachers, and food shack. Present estimates for addressing these capital improvement and restoration needs in parks (excluding buildings, such as the Swim Center) range from \$925,000 to \$1.35 million (see **Table 6-4**). This is an “order of magnitude” estimate prepared by City staff based on a preliminary needs assessment. This assessment has taken into consideration projects that could be undertaken as volunteer projects (through Adopt-a-Park or Earth Day activities), in addition to improvements that require major capital outlays (over \$5,000). Volunteer activities, however, do require a commitment of supervisory staff time.

As of Spring 1999, the Parks and Recreation Commission is continuing a park-by-park review of facilities and programs, and a more detailed cost estimate for needed improvements will be developed. This will then feed into the City’s “Services for the 21st Century Program” which is designed to reach community consensus on a variety of budget and public service issues.

Table 6-4: Estimated Capital Improvement Needs for City Park Facilities

Park	Per Park Estimate	Total Estimate Range
Tassajara, Canyon Trail, Cerrito Vista	\$125k – \$150k	\$375k – \$450k
Harding, Central, Creekside, Huber, Castro, Fairmont	\$75k – \$125k	\$450k – \$750k
Poinsett, Arlington	\$50k – \$75k	\$100k – \$150k
Total		\$925k – \$1.35 million

Source: City of El Cerrito Maintenance and Engineering Services Manager, presentation to the City Council on April 20, 1998.

In addition to capital improvement needs for existing facilities, Community Services Division staff has identified several areas where facilities are inadequate to meet existing and projected community demand for recreation programs:

- **Youth Activities and Facility.** There is a strong and growing demand for recreation programs for teenagers. This year (1999) the division is adding several new recreational programs for youth (e.g., girls hoops and a “creative arts academy”). The staff has identified the need for a “gymnasium/teen center” or similar facility as an important issue for the future.

- **Senior Center.** The City has a long-term lease for the “Open House” Senior Center from the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The center has several deficiencies, including inadequate parking and a lack of space to accommodate new programs. There is also a trend toward decentralizing recreation services and targeting programs to the “well senior” (representing a growing portion of the senior population). These issues will need to be considered and addressed when the current facility lease expires.
- **West El Cerrito.** The City needs a community facility and park to serve the residents in its western portion. This could possibly be accomplished in partnership with community churches, neighborhood schools, or other institutions located in the City of Richmond.

The City Council, at its 1999 annual goal setting session, adopted a five-year goal of expanded recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages. It adopted a top priority action item to develop a parks and recreation facilities financing measure that includes the Swim Center, Canyon Trail Clubhouse, gymnasium/teen facility, and playing field.

C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Goal PR1: Adequate, diverse, and accessible recreational opportunities for all residents – including children, youth, seniors, and others with special needs – in parks, school yards, and open space.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PR1.1	Priorities for Rehabilitation. Place the highest priority on maintaining and rehabilitating existing recreational facilities to operational and safety standards that, at a minimum, comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The highest priority facility for rehabilitation is the Swim Center on Moeser Lane.	• Capital Improvements Program • Public/Private Partnerships • Grant Funds • Special Taxes
PR1.2	Regular Maintenance Program. Continue regular inspection and maintenance of park facilities to prolong the life of equipment, ensure facility safety and accessibility, and enhance the enjoyment of park users.	• Annual Budget
PR1.3	Level of Service Standard. Use a level of service standard of five acres of publicly owned parkland per 1,000 residents as the minimum requirement for recreation and open space land. Additional requirements for publicly owned recreation and open space land may be imposed by the City on development approvals, dependent upon the characteristics of the project, including its proximity to existing recreation and open space facilities. This requirement is independent of any requirements for project-scale open space addressed by Policy CD3.2.	• Development Review

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| PR1.4 | Minimum Parkland. Ensure that the amount of City owned park and open space lands is not reduced below the 1999 level of 131.5 acres, and work with other public agencies to ensure that the amount of other publicly owned park and open space lands is not reduced. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space Preservation Program • Open Space Acquisition Priorities • Open Space Funding • Capital Improvements Program • Intergovernmental Coordination |
| PR1.5 | Costs Resulting from New Facilities. Assure that long-term maintenance needs are considered when reviewing new park facility proposals, including the need for future staff and equipment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review |
| PR1.6 | Private Involvement. Continue to encourage community organizations and private citizens to help maintain public parks and open spaces, and to assist in running recreation programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/Private Partnerships |
| PR1.7 | Coordination on Use of School Facilities. Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities, including connections to the Ohlone Greenway, for all El Cerrito residents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination |
| PR1.8 | Inter-Agency Coordination. Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities for all El Cerrito residents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination |
| PR1.9 | Alternative Sources of Space. Continue to explore the possibility of using semi-public and private facilities for additional indoor recreational space. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination • Public/Private Partnerships |
| PR1.10 | Existing Facilities. Encourage the continuation of Mira Vista Golf Club, Cougar Field, and Camp Herms because of their contribution to meeting recreational needs and providing aesthetic appeal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public/Private Partnerships |

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| <p>PR1.11 New Parks. Pursue the purchase of new parks with City money only after existing facilities are brought up to an acceptable level of adequacy or when action is required to meet the accepted level of service or the minimum parkland requirements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital Improvements Program |
| <p>PR1.12 New Residential Development. Require that all new multi-family residential projects provide on-site open space and recreational facilities for residents or provide a combination of park in-lieu fees and on-site facilities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development Review ● In-lieu Fees |
| <p>PR1.13 People with Special Needs. Ensure that public access points to open space areas and design features for all recreational facilities provide equal opportunity for people with special needs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City Project Design |
| <p>PR1.14 Bicycles. Implement bicycle route improvements, including signing, striping, paving, and providing bicycle racks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bicycle Master Plan |
| <p>PR1.15 Development Impacts. Development should not be allowed to denigrate or interfere with the use or enjoyment of City-owned park, recreational, and open space facilities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development Review |
| <p>PR1.16 Recreation Programs. Maintain and expand, as budgets allow, existing recreation programs to meet the needs of City residents.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Budget ● Public/Private Partnerships |
| <p>PR1.17 Buffer Zones. Encourage the creation of native plant buffer zones between natural areas and residences.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development Review |

Goal PR2: High quality open space protected for the benefit of present and future generations, reflecting a variety of important values: ecological, educational, aesthetic, economic and recreational. These values are interwoven throughout the community in numerous ways so that the preservation of open space is very important to the well being of the City.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PR2.1	Open Space Purpose. Identify and protect the natural resources of the Tri-Cities Area (El Cerrito, Richmond and San Pablo) for the benefit of present and future generations.	• Open Space Preservation Program • Open Space Acquisition Priorities • Intergovernmental Coordination
PR2.2	Development Suitability. Encourage urban growth in those areas where the natural characteristics of the land are most suited to such development, and to protect the public from risks to life and property.	• Open Space Preservation Program • Development Review
PR2.3	Open Space Plan Map. Preserve the open space areas identified on the Open Space Plan Map for visual resources, protection of environmental resources, public health and safety reasons, and for recreational use.	• Open Space Preservation Program • Open Space Funding
PR2.4	Open Space Strategy. In meeting open space objectives to secure and preserve open space in perpetuity, the City will make maximum use of approaches that minimize ongoing City costs and liability exposure. One approach will be to employ the development review process, wherever appropriate, to secure dedications, easements, and/or maintenance agreements.	• Open Space Preservation Program • Development Review • Scenic Easements • Public/Private Partnerships • Open Space Consolidation

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.1 through R1.3.

See Figure 12.

- PR2.5 Open Space Use.** Improvements within open space areas shall be limited to those needed for educational and recreational purposes, and those improvements necessary for health and safety purposes. All improvements shall be compatible with protection and preservation of existing natural and habitat resources.
- City Project Design
 - Development Review
- PR2.6 Existing Open Space Preservation.** Except where extraordinary circumstances indicate otherwise, ensure that development decisions protect existing open space areas.
- Open Space Preservation Program
 - Development Review

Goal PR3: Public access to open space areas while protecting important habitats.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- PR3.1 Clear Delineation.** Clearly delineate which areas of publicly owned open space are appropriate for public use and access, and clearly differentiate them from those areas to be protected from human disturbance.
- Public Access Program
- PR3.2 Open Space Improvements.** Design any improvements in open space areas to minimize adverse impacts to habitats, view, and other open space resources.
- City Project Design
- PR3.3 Creek Restoration.** Integrate recreational amenities with creek restoration efforts in a way that protects riparian values, including natural habitats.
- City Project Design
 - Development Review
 - Grant Funds

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.7 through R1.10.

NON-RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

A. Setting

The City owns and maintains the buildings that house the City's public safety departments (police and fire) and administrative functions. It also owns and maintains a variety of buildings to meet the cultural and other needs of El Cerritans. These buildings include the Public Safety Building; City Hall; City Community Center and Swim Center; Cerrito Vista Childcare Center; Library; Contra Costa Civic Theater; and clubhouses and childcare facilities at the City's parks and public elementary schools. In addition, the City owns and maintains the corporation yard and recycling center. The City also maintains the Open House Senior Center, which it leases from the school district. The Community Facilities Map provides a complete listing of City-owned facilities. The map also shows facilities owned by the school district and several private entities.

The City recently completed an ADA-compliance program (Americans with Disabilities Act), including completion of its Transition Plan in accordance with federal laws. This effort was funded from the proceeds of property sales by the City.



B. Trends

Most City-owned and maintained facilities were constructed during the 1950's and have significant deferred maintenance issues, including rotting roofs and tile flooring; deteriorated plumbing; outdated wiring; and antiquated equipment. At the Swim Center (built in 1962), the training and lap pools need resurfacing; a significant portion of the pool deck needs to be replaced; the bathhouse roof requires

replacement; and the pool's pumps, lighting, plumbing, and filter systems need to be replaced.

In addition to these maintenance issues, nearly all of the City's facilities require major structural work to bring them up to modern building standards. These code-related issues include the need for further accessibility modifications to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; the need to remove lead-based paint and asbestos; and the need for seismic retrofitting.

This last issue – seismic retrofitting – is particularly important given El Cerrito's proximity to the Hayward Fault (it passes through El Cerrito near the eastern city limits, generally following the route of Arlington Boulevard). Experts have determined that there is a high probability of a large earthquake (magnitude 7 or greater) in the next thirty years along this fault segment and other nearby faults.

Two buildings where seismic retrofitting is of particular concern are the Public Safety Building on San Pablo and Manila and the Community Center on Moeser. The Public Safety Building is the designated primary facility for emergency operations in El Cerrito, while the Community Center is a "second alternate" for emergency operations and is the only Red Cross-certified emergency mass care facility in the city. (Some schools may be eligible for certification.) Both facilities require seismic evaluation and retrofitting, and the Community Center requires an emergency generator. Furthermore, the Public Safety Building has inadequate facilities for accommodating male and female police officers and there is insufficient storage space. The exterior design of the building does not allow for the safe conveying of suspects from the parking lot into the building. A Sallyport or drive-in enclosed garage would be preferable from a security standpoint.

A conservative cost estimate for bringing City facilities up to current code specifications and giving them another 30 years of life is in the range of \$2 million to \$3 million. This does not include any type of construction for a new City Hall, which has been housed in temporary "portables" at its Manila and San Pablo location since 1987.

The City Council, at its 1999 annual goal setting session, adopted a five-year goal of investment in City infrastructure and facilities. It adopted two applicable high priority action items:

- Begin developing a community center by having a community discussion on form and placement of a City Hall/Safety Building and a Cultural/Arts and History Center.
- Develop a financing measure for the Public Safety Headquarters, Community Center, and neighborhood clubhouses to make them seismically safe and ready to respond to natural disasters.

C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Goal CF1: Safe and adequate community facilities that allow the City to offer better services and inspire a sense of community pride.

Policies	Implementation Measures
CF1.1 Safety. Place the highest priority on ensuring the safety of existing community facilities, especially the Public Safety Building, Community Center, and neighborhood clubhouses, including seismic retrofits and necessary upgrades.	• Capital Improvements Program • Asset Replacement Fund • Special Taxes • Grant Funds
CF1.2 Regular Maintenance. Provide regular maintenance of community facilities to ensure their continued usability and prevent deferred maintenance, which adds to long-term costs.	• Annual Budget
CF1.3 Development Incentives. Obtain community facilities through appropriate development incentives that are consistent with other policies in this Plan.	• Development Review
CF1.4 Future Development. Require future development to pay its fair share of purchasing sites and financing needed improvements for existing and future community facilities.	• Development Review • Impact Fees
CF1.5 Responding to Growth. Provide new or expanded community facilities as the need increases due to increased population or development.	• Capital Improvements Program • Development Review

*See section entitled
"Development Densities and
Intensities" in Chapter 4.*

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| <p>CF1.6 New Facilities. Build a new City Hall/Public Safety Building, gymnasium/teen center/multi-purpose facility, cultural and arts center, and children's art center in the Canyon Trail Clubhouse, provided that funds are available after public safety upgrades and deferred maintenance are accomplished.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvements Program • Special Taxes |
| <p>CF1.7 Asset Replacement. Ensure that money is set aside for major repairs, renovations, and replacement of public facilities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Replacement Fund |
| <p>CF1.8 Joint Use. Seek opportunities for joint use of community facilities and shared maintenance and operation agreements with other service providers, including the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) and Contra Costa County.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Coordination |

PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Setting

In addition to providing public safety services, police, fire protection, emergency medical services, and emergency preparedness, the City also provides a storm drainage system, a recycling center and curbside collection of recyclable materials, and manages and maintains facilities located in the public rights-of-way. Other community services are provided by regional agencies, including East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), which provides the City's water supply and wastewater treatment; Stege Sanitary District, which provides wastewater collection; East Bay Sanitary Company, which provides solid waste collection and disposal; and the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), which provides elementary and secondary schools. The following section discusses needs, goals, and policies for those services provided by the City.

Police Services

The El Cerrito Police Department provides police services throughout the City, including community policing and education programs that involve citizens in crime prevention. A recent enhancement to the department's operations is a Bicycle Patrol program, partly in response to community concerns about crime activity on the Ohlone Greenway (BART) bicycle path. The police operate out of the Public Safety Building at 10900 San Pablo Avenue, which they share with the Fire Department.

The Police Department has a number of intergovernmental partnerships that provide and support police services. The Richmond Police Department provides emergency police dispatching and, starting in 2000, will provide communications for all emergency services as well as normal operations under contract to El Cerrito. The El Cerrito Police Department is working with Contra Costa County to coordinate all police records management by the year 2000. Moreover, the El Cerrito Police serve on a West Contra County Narcotics Task Force with other City staff and with state and federal agencies to cooperate on drug enforcement. Lastly, the Police Department contracts with the State of California for the California Identification System to use its computer technology to evaluate fingerprint evidence for the identification of criminals.

Fire Protection Services

The El Cerrito Fire Department operates two fire stations in the City, including the newly constructed Station 72 on Arlington Boulevard. The Department ensures a full range of fire suppression and emergency services through joint operations agreements with the City of Richmond Fire Department and West County (Contra Costa) Fire District. The El Cerrito Fire Department directly serves Kensington under a contract with the Kensington Fire Protection District. The East Richmond Heights portion of the planning area is served through joint response agreements

with the Richmond and Contra Costa County Fire Departments. The service area of the Department includes four areas that have been identified as “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones” by the California Department of Forestry: the El Cerrito Hills Area; the Canyon Trail Area; Cerrito Creek adjacent to Albany Hill; and nearly the entire community of Kensington. In these areas the City has established standards for vegetation management to reduce fire hazards.

Storm Drain Facilities

The City has completed the first phase of a comprehensive storm drain rehabilitation program, funded by a \$6.3 million bond issue in 1993. Through this program, the City has addressed the highest priority needs in the storm drain system, reducing the incidence of system overflows and localized flooding during periods of heavy rain (with only three problem sites reported during the heavy rains of this past winter). Following completion of the first phase improvements, the City plans to undertake a follow-up assessment to determine remaining system improvement needs to ensure adequate system capacity and proper long-term functioning. Because the City’s creeks are an integral part of the storm drain system, the current effort has also been exploring opportunities for creek restoration. In the past several years, three creek sites have been restored as part of the storm drain improvement program. As of 1999, the City is budgeting approximately \$25,000 per year for creek restoration in order to meet its federally mandated NPDES requirements.

Recycling Services

The City operates a Recycling Center at the east end of Schmidt Lane. The Center serves as a processing facility for the materials collected by City’s commercial and residential recycling programs, as well as a popular drop-off site that serves the region. The Center collects approximately 4,300 tons of recyclable materials each year, 2,500 tons of which are through its drop-off program. The East Bay Sanitary Company, the City’s franchised refuse and green waste hauler, began providing a residential curbside green waste collection program in April 1997, which diverted 1,883 tons of compostable materials in its first year of operation. El Cerrito is one of five member cities of the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority, which establishes contracts and rates for refuse disposal and green waste composting services, and provides regional education and program planning for waste diversion. Recycling has been and will continue to be an important part of the City’s and the region’s integrated waste management program.

Public Rights-of-Way

The City is responsible for the management and maintenance of facilities located in the public rights-of-way, including streets, signals, sidewalks, pathways, curbs and gutters, street trees, signage, and street lights (with the exception of San Pablo Avenue from the City’s southern boundary to Cutting Boulevard, which is State Route 123 and therefore managed and maintained by CalTrans). Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation, includes additional discussion and several policies on rights-of-way.

B. Trends

In addition to the existing deficiencies in public services and facilities, the projected growth and development in El Cerrito will contribute additional demand. As the City continues to grow there will be an increasing demand on public safety services. The Police Department is currently facing potential staff reductions due to ongoing fiscal constraints. The Department is also seeking funds for a major seismic retrofit and expansion of the City's Public Safety Building. The Fire Department is also concerned with the increasing fuel loads in the City's parks and the wildland interface in East Richmond Heights (where there is no fuel reduction ordinance in effect). The needed seismic retrofit and expansion of the City's Public Safety Building is also an issue for the Fire Department, as is the need for improvements to EBMUD's water supply system in the City.

Deferred maintenance has taken a toll on many streets, creating a pressing need for resurfacing and other improvements. The City estimates that approximately \$5 million is needed to address existing deferred maintenance issues for asphalt resurfacing. Subsequent to this investment, an ongoing program of preventive maintenance could address street pavement needs within the current budget framework (approximately \$250,000 annually).

The City Council, at its 1999 annual goal setting session, adopted a five-year goal of investment in City infrastructure and facilities. It adopted an applicable high priority action item to expand enhancement and restoration of El Cerrito creeks, with a watershed emphasis.



C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Police Services

Goal PS1: An adequate, comprehensive, coordinated law enforcement system consistent with the needs of the community.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PS1.1	Development Review. Prior to approval of new development, the Police Department shall be requested to review all applications to determine the ability of the department to provide protection services. The ability to provide protection to existing development shall not be reduced below acceptable levels as a consequence of new development. Recommendations such as the need for additional equipment, facilities, and adequate access may be incorporated as conditions of approval.	• Development Review • Public/Private Partnerships
PS1.2	Development Design. Development design should address public safety issues – encourage use of technology to support defensible design, encourage neighborhood social interaction, maintain eyes on the street, and support a clean and orderly public appearance.	• Development Review
PS1.3	Service Level. Maintain the current service level of 1.26 officers per 1,000 daytime population, provided adequate financial resources are available.	• Annual Budget • City Policy
PS1.4	Police Data and Statistics. Maintain and monitor calls for service data and publish annual statistics.	• City Policy

Also see Land Use Policy LU4.6 and Community Design Policy CD2.1.

PS1.5	BART Facilities. Maintain bicycle patrols on the BART bicycle paths and continue to cooperate with BART police regarding the policing of the BART linear park and BART parking lots.	• Annual Budget • City Policy • Intergovernmental Coordination
PS1.6	Community Outreach. Maintain community outreach programs to promote public education on crime prevention and to discourage and deter crimes in the community.	• Annual Budget • Public/Private Partnerships
PS1.7	Traffic Enforcement. Ensure safe streets for all vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians through adequate traffic enforcement.	• Annual Budget • City Policy

Fire Services

Goal PS2: A community that has minimized the risks to lives and property due to fire hazards.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PS2.1	Development Review. Prior to approval of new development, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that adequate emergency water supply, storage, and conveyance facilities, and access for fire protection either are or will be provided concurrent with development. The ability to provide protection to existing development shall not be reduced below acceptable levels as a consequence of new development. Recommendations such as the need for additional equipment, facilities, and adequate access may be incorporated as conditions of approval.	• Development Review • Public Facilities Fee
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PS2.2	Response Time. Maintain an average emergency response time for the first fire engine of less than six minutes for 95 percent of all emergency calls for service, provided adequate financial resources are available.	• Annual Budget
PS2.3	Fire Protection Rating. Maintain or improve the City's existing ISO fire protection rating of 3.	• Annual Budget
PS2.4	Vegetation Management. Continue to maintain the Fire Hazard Reduction Program.	• Annual Budget • Intergovernmental Coordination • Fire Hazard Reduction Program
PS2.5	Fire Data and Statistics. Continue to maintain and monitor a response time log and compile and publish annual statistics.	• City Policy
PS2.6	Update Codes and Ordinances. Review, amend, and update at regular intervals all relevant public codes and ordinances to incorporate new technologies and fire standards.	• Annual Budget • City Policy
PS2.7	Facility Review. Review at regular intervals all fire facilities in the community to ensure their adequacy in relation to such factors as fire hydrant capacity, peak load water requirements, fire access roads to wildland areas, and fire protection factors.	• Annual Budget • City Policy
PS2.8	Water Supply and Pressure. Monitor and improve water supply and pressure for fire fighting, with particular attention to the wildland interface.	• Annual Budget • Intergovernmental Coordination
PS2.9	Fire Protection Upgrades. Monitor and seek funding for water supply system upgrades necessary for fire protection along the wildland interface and in the event of a major earthquake.	• Annual Budget • Grant Funds • Intergovernmental Coordination

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| PS2.10 | Reducing Fuel Loads. Work with the City's Fire Department and Community Development Department to reduce the risk of wildland fires by reducing fuel loads in City parks and open areas. Work with botanists and wildlife biologists to reduce fire loads in a sustainable manner, so as not to adversely impact native plant and animal communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget • City Policy • Public/Private Partnership • Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan |
| PS2.11 | Fire Access. Establish and maintain a system of fire trails and Fire Department access points to ensure rapid access to parks, rights-of-way, and isolated parcels of property. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Review • Intergovernmental Coordination |
| PS2.12 | Inter-Agency Coordination. Cooperate and coordinate with the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County Fire Department to reduce the risk of fires along the wildland interface in the East Richmond Heights area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget • Intergovernmental Coordination |
| PS2.13 | Joint Response Agreements. Maintain and improve the City's ability to participate in existing joint response agreements that enhance its ability to respond to fire, EMS, or disaster needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Budget • Intergovernmental Coordination |

Public Infrastructure – Public Rights-of-Way and Storm Drains

Goal PS3: Safe and adequate public infrastructure to serve El Cerrito's residents, now and in the future.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PS3.1	Development Approval. Approve new development only if the capacity of public infrastructure is in place or can be reasonably provided.	• Capital Improvements Program • Development Review
PS3.2	Fair-Share Cost Allocations. Require future development to pay its fair share of purchasing rights-of-way and of financing needed improvements for existing and future public infrastructure.	• Development Review • Traffic Impact Fee
PS3.3	Upgrading Infrastructure. Upgrade public infrastructure that experiences deterioration or obsolescence.	• Capital Improvements Program
PS3.4	Capital Improvement Program. Coordinate future capital improvement expenditures for public infrastructure with the City's long-range capital improvement program.	• Capital Improvements Program • Annual Budget
PS3.5	Coordination with Service Providers. Coordinate and work with other service providers, including EBMUD, the Stege Sanitary District, the East Bay Sanitary Company, Contra Costa County, CalTrans, BART, AC Transit, and the East Bay Regional Park District to ensure adequate and safe public infrastructure to serve existing and planned development in the community.	• Capital Improvements Program • Intergovernmental Coordination

Storm Drains

Goal PS4: An adequate storm drainage system to serve existing and future planned development

Policies

Implementation Measures

PS4.1 Monitoring Storm Drain Needs.

Monitor and assess the need for storm drain system improvements at regular intervals to ensure adequate system capacity and proper long-term functioning.

- Capital Improvements Program
- Annual Budget

PS4.2

Creek Restoration. Seek funding opportunities from State and federal agencies and from non-profit foundations for urban creek restoration efforts.

- Grant Funds
- Riparian and Stream Restoration Program

Also see Natural and Historic Resources Policies R1.7 through R1.10.

Recycling

Goal PS5: A system that minimizes the City's generation and disposal of solid waste materials by providing an adequate and integrated waste management program and related facilities to serve existing and future planned development.

Policies

Implementation Measures

PS5.1 Monitoring Recycling Needs. Monitor and assess the City's recycling collection program, the green waste collection program, and the operations of the Recycling Center at regular intervals to ensure an adequate, integrated, state-of-the-art approach to waste management.

- Annual Budget
- City Policy

PS5.2 Funding Opportunities. Seek funding opportunities from State, federal, and non-profit foundations for maintaining and/or upgrading the waste management program and the Recycling Center.

- Grant Funds

PS5.3 Coordination with Other Agencies.

- City Policy

Coordinate and work with the East Bay Sanitary Company and the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority to maintain a convenient, cost-effective, fee- and rate-supported waste management program.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following is a summary of the major tools available to the City for implementation of the policies of this chapter, Public Services and Facilities.

1. **Annual Budget.** The annual budget should provide adequate funds for community facilities, infrastructure, and services. In particular, it should place a high priority on the inspection and maintenance of recreational facilities, especially on ensuring the safety of these facilities. Once the existing problems of deferred maintenance are corrected, it should be avoided because it inevitably leads to higher costs.
2. **Asset Replacement Fund.** The City should create an asset replacement fund such that City facilities can be brought up to current code specifications. Funding could include general fund reserves, state grants for seismic upgrades, and voter-approved special taxes. An initial goal of \$3 million for the Asset Replacement Fund would allow for the code upgrades and would delay the need for facility replacement in the near term. In addition, the City should make annual contributions to the asset replacement fund equal to between 3 and 5 percent of the total replacement cost of all major civic facilities so that they can be rebuilt or significantly renovated within 20 to 30 years.
3. **Bicycle Master Plan.** More information about a Bicycle Master Plan is contained in Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation.
4. **Capital Improvements Program.** The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a compilation of the capital improvements planned for construction over the next five years in El Cerrito. It includes cost estimates, the phasing of specific improvements and associated costs and methods with which specific improvements will be financed. The City should continue to conduct annual reviews of the CIP and add civic and public facilities as funding sources are identified. The CIP should provide a systematic set of priorities for non-operating expenditures such as major facility restoration and upgrades, as well as any new parks and recreation, community, and infrastructure facilities that might be needed to meet level of service standards. Priority should be on ensuring public safety.
5. **City Policy.** The City can undertake several of its implementation measures by making changes in its internal operating policies, assuming these changes would be within budget limits.
6. **City Project Design.** When the City designs facilities or is a participant in a project, it should ensure that the design is consistent with the policies in this Plan.

7. **Development Review.** The City should assess the impact of new development on the demand for services, public facilities, and infrastructure and should implement mitigation measures and other mechanisms to help finance needed improvements. In particular, projects should be evaluated for their potential impacts on parks and recreation facilities, the resources of the project site relative to the park and recreation needs of the community, their compliance with the requirements for on-site open space and recreational facilities. The City's development regulations (zoning) should provide for an incentives program that would offer benefits to developers in exchange for the provision of community facilities. The City should also assess the public safety features of the design of proposed development projects. All projects, including public-sponsored projects, should be reviewed for consistency with the General Plan as early as possible in order to minimize wasted effort on projects deemed not to be in conformance.
8. **Education Programs.** The City should promote education programs that heighten awareness of important local habitats and the need for their protection.
9. **Fire Hazard Reduction Program.** The City, in cooperation with the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and East Bay Regional Park District, should review and update, when required, the Fire Hazard Reduction Program that establishes standards for vegetation management and provides guidelines for property owners located within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) (Title 8, Section 8.30.010 El Cerrito Municipal Code (See Figure 12)), including fuel reduction and creation of fuel breaks along property lines and adjacent to structures.
10. **Grant Funds.** The City should continue to identify, evaluate, and, where appropriate, apply for available grants. A variety of State and Federal programs grant local governments funds for developing local park and recreation facilities. Grant funds also may be available for creek restoration projects, especially given they provide a drainage function. The City should seek funding opportunities, such as State grants for seismic retrofitting, as well as foundation grants to complete an upgrade, expansion, and seismic retrofit for the Public Safety Building. The City should determine whether grant funds are available from federal or state sources to upgrade the waste management system and recycling center, and implement street beautification programs.
11. **Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan.** The City should continue to implement the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan and update the plan as required.
12. **Impact Fees.** The City should initiate an impact fee study to help determine whether it would be beneficial to establish impact fees to fund community buildings and other civic facilities.

13. **In-lieu Fees.** The City should consider the adoption of in-lieu fees, consistent with the applicable state laws, for funding parks and recreational facilities.
14. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** The City should continue to coordinate with the West Contra Costa Unified School District, other cities, Contra Costa County, East Bay Regional Park District, and other agencies on the provision of adequate park and recreation facilities to serve the residents of El Cerrito. These agencies should cooperate in studies of matters pertaining to open space and environmental resource protection. The City should ensure that government agencies observe all requirements for referral of projects to other agencies prior to approval. The City should continue to coordinate with other jurisdictions and agencies to obtain the use of other additional community facilities for its residents. Government Code Section 65401 authorizes the City Council to obtain lists of all capital improvements planned by public agencies in the City. These proposed capital improvements must be consistent with the General Plan. As part of its annual review of the Capital Improvement Program, the City should include a Section 65401 review, listing all capital improvement projects proposed by other jurisdictions during the following year and making a finding relative to the consistency of each project with the General Plan. As part of the effort to maintain high-quality services and implement the General Plan, the City should maintain an effective liaison with the districts and agencies that influence public facilities and services.
15. **Open Space Acquisition Priorities.** The City should review potential open space and establish priorities for acquisition by the City or by other agencies, or protection through other means. High priority will be given to biologically sensitive and visually prominent lands that seem most at risk from development. Conduct an inventory of unique natural areas, important wildlife habitats, and areas suitable for nature study, particularly near schools.
16. **Open Space Consolidation.** Open space received through dedication that is adjacent to East Bay Regional Park District property lands should be offered to the Park District.
17. **Open Space Funding.** The City should identify funding sources for acquisition and ongoing maintenance for public open space lands.
18. **Open Space Preservation Program.** The following means will be considered for preserving open space resources, in order of priority: (1) private development review process, (2) public-private partnerships, and lastly, (3) public funds. Possible means are described below.

Private Resources:

- a. Require permanent dedication of open space areas with high habitat, visual, recreational or archaeological values as a condition of development. These lands should be owned and maintained by homeowner associations unless they are appropriate for use as trails or other public-access uses.

- b. Use visual or public-access easements and building setbacks to protect open space resources while allowing development on private parcels.
- c. Encourage development to be compact and clustered in order to protect areas with high open space values.
- d. Encourage grants and donations of undeveloped property with high open-space values from private individuals or organizations.
- e. Encourage private, non-profit, and other public agencies to acquire and maintain undeveloped land for open space preservation. These methods are preferred over the use of city funds for acquisition.

Public-Private Partnerships:

- a. When parcels on planned trail corridors are developed, require the developer to construct the portion of the trail crossing the parcel as one of the conditions of development.
- b. Work with organizations such as the Urban Creeks Council, Trust for Public Lands, East Bay Regional Park District, Nature Conservancy, Coastal Conservancy, and other cities and counties to perform creek restoration and other tasks related to open space.

Public (City) Funds:

- a. Prioritize parcels with high habitat, visual, archaeological or recreational values for purchase by the City if funds become available.

19. **Public Access Program.** The City should identify which portions of open space areas can be made accessible to the public and which portions should be off limits to protect the natural features of the area.
20. **Public Facilities Fee.** The City should consider adopting a citywide public facilities impact fee ordinance, under the requirements of the applicable laws, to fund new community and public facilities, including public safety facilities, required to serve new residents and employees in the City.
21. **Public/Private Partnerships.** The City should encourage public/private partnerships with the community to improve public safety, including neighborhood crime prevention programs, public education, and development design to discourage crime. The City should continue to reach out to its residents, landowners, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations to educate them about the value of parks and recreational facilities and enlist their assistance in providing and maintaining facilities, and assisting in recreation programs. The City also should help to organize and publicize groups that undertake cleanup and restoration events.

22. **Riparian and Stream Restoration Program.** The City should develop and implement a Riparian and Stream Restoration Program that identifies areas and stream segments that should be restored and provides policy guidance for such actions.
23. **Scenic Easements.** El Cerrito should encourage the granting of scenic easements on landforms and key visual resources that could be subject to development.
24. **Special Taxes.** The City should analyze the advisability of holding a special election on adopting a special tax – a parks and recreation facilities financing measure – to upgrade selected park and recreation facilities. The City also should assess the feasibility of adopting a special tax, or other financing mechanisms, to pay for the upgrade and seismic retrofit of the Public Safety Building and other critical facilities. The City should also explore funding opportunities, including voter approval for a special tax, and other financing mechanisms to build a new City administrative office building as part of a revitalized downtown area.
25. **Traffic Impact Fee.** The City should consider development of a citywide traffic impact fee and accompanying ordinance, under the requirements of applicable laws, to fund transportation improvements to mitigate the traffic impacts of new growth development. The traffic impact fee would be in-lieu of the off-site mitigation requirements, but would not replace the developer's responsibility for frontage improvements. The traffic impact fee may be used to fund roadway extensions, intersection improvements, safety improvements, or improvements and amenities to pedestrian, bicycle or transit facilities.



Chapter 7 Resources and Hazards

CHAPTER 7 RESOURCES AND HAZARDS

The Resources and Hazards section of the General Plan covers four State mandated elements: Open Space, Conservation, Safety and Noise. The subject matter of this element is intertwined with the rest of the General Plan. For example, areas designated for open space are also intended to minimize damage due to geologic hazards, and trails plans that link local and regional open space areas at the same time providing recreation and offering an alternative to driving.

Hazards policies address issues related to geologic and seismic risk, flooding, hazardous materials and noise. The purpose is to identify and appraise hazards in the community, which will establish a basis for the goals, policies and implementing actions necessary to assure community safety. The noise portion of the element is concerned with planning for land uses that are typically sensitive to noise impacts, including residential development, residential neighborhood quality of life, nursing homes, schools, wildlife sanctuaries, hospitals and treatment centers.

The element also contains policies for the preservation of open space and the conservation of natural resources. The General Plan designates open space and sets forth policies and programs defining ways in which open space will be used, water and air quality will be enhanced, and natural resources will be protected and managed.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

A. Setting

Open Space

Open space is discussed primarily in Chapters 4 and 6, although it also serves an important function in preserving natural resources. This is especially true of plant and animal habitats, creeks, erosion control, and visual amenities. Open space serving these functions is subject to the same level of protection as provided by the policies and implementation measures in Chapter 6.



See section entitled "Parks, Recreation and Open Space" and Figure 12 in Chapter 6.

Wildlife

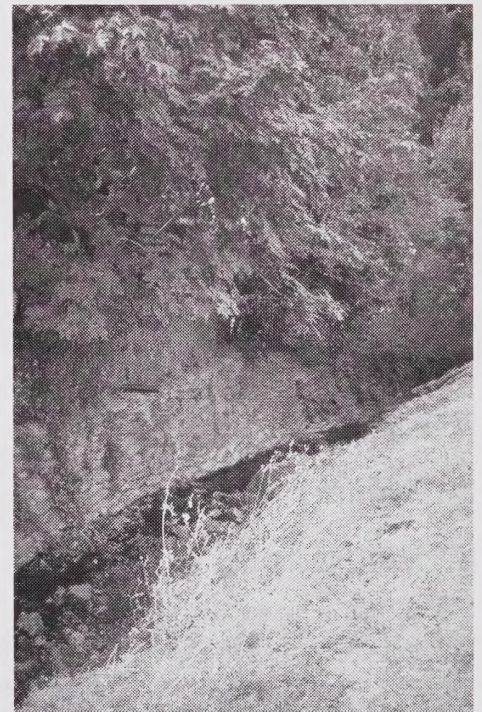
The scarcity of undeveloped land in the City has had a limiting effect on natural areas for both vegetation and wildlife. Some forms of wildlife, such as deer, fox, coyote, and raccoons, can be found in the hills of the City, especially next to the large open areas of Wildcat Canyon. Wildlife also have been found elsewhere in the City. The natural habitat within the City itself is somewhat limited, although it provides an important part of the character and quality of the community. Some plant and animal species are designated as sensitive because of their overall rarity, endangerment, restricted distribution, and/or unique habitat requirements.

Air Quality

Because ventilation is relatively good, and there is little transport of pollutants into El Cerrito from other upwind urban areas, the pollution potential of El Cerrito is relatively low compared to other parts of the San Francisco Bay Area. However, during periods of light or calm winds, which typically occur in the fall and winter months, El Cerrito and the entire Bay Area are subject to stagnation and poor air quality.

Storm Runoff

The watershed within the city limits is fully urbanized, and relatively little additional runoff is anticipated from new development. There are eight major watersheds that drain through the City of El Cerrito. These watersheds generally drain from the Berkeley Hills along the east border of El Cerrito westward towards the City of Richmond and San Francisco Bay. Runoff from the hills generally drains into intermittent drainageways. These waterways are steep, average six feet in width, and have rocky to cobbly substrates incised into bedrock. Recent improvements to the city's storm drainage system have dramatically improved capacity of the system. El Cerrito has also adopted management guidelines to comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements. NPDES is a federal environmental protection program that regulates the discharge of contaminants to surface waters.



Historic Resources

Prehistoric resources typically include chert or obsidian flakes, projectile points, mortars and pestles, and dark, friable soil containing shell and bone, dietary debris, heat-affected rock, or human burials. Prehistoric archaeological sites in Western Contra Costa County are typically located near historical marsh margins, on terraces along watercourses, and at the base of hills near watercourses. Common prehistoric archaeological resources found at such sites include shell middens and bedrock milling stations. The City of El Cerrito is situated to the east of the general zone where shellmounds have been found. Further from the shoreline and upslope, the likelihood of encountering a classic deposit diminishes. Less than five percent of the city has been surveyed for prehistoric resources. There are five recorded prehistoric archaeological sites within El Cerrito's boundaries.

"Historic" resources typically include stone or adobe foundations or walls; structures and remains with square nails; and refuse deposits (often found in old wells and privies). The Office of Historic Preservation has also determined that buildings and structures 45 years and older may be of historic value. There are only a few identified historic properties in the city that are listed in the *State Office of Historic Preservation Historic Properties Directory*, the *Contra Costa County Historic Resources Inventory*, and/or a list of historic buildings identified by the El Cerrito Historical Society. There are no properties in the city listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*.

B. Trends

Open space and natural resources are important to El Cerrito and reflect a variety of important values: ecological, educational, aesthetic, economic and recreational. These values are interwoven throughout the community in numerous ways so that the preservation of these resources is very important to the well being of the City. City policies have preserved open space and natural resource values in combination with protection of public health and safety. Such actions include the designation of the Hillside Natural Area and other open space areas, and preparation of the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan. (See Figure 12, Open Space Plan.)

This portion of the General Plan is designed to accomplish two major objectives:

1. To identify and protect open space used for the preservation of natural resources and to protect the resources themselves for the benefit of present and future generations.
2. To encourage urban growth in those areas where the natural characteristics of the land are most suited to such development, and to protect the public from risks to life and property.

To accomplish these objectives, two types of policies are proposed—one type proposes specific physical changes, or prescribes management policies for a distinct physical area. The other type of policy applies to the entire area, and prescribes management techniques for new development, makes recommendations to other agencies, or suggests efforts to educate the public.

C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

Goal R1: Protected natural resources (important habitat, ecological resources, key visual resources, ridges and ridgelines, creeks and streambanks, steeper slopes, vista points, and major features), and clean air and water.

Policies

Implementation Measures

R1.1	Habitat Protection. Preserve oak/woodland, riparian vegetation, creeks, native grasslands, wildlife corridors and other important wildlife habitats. Loss of these habitats should be fully offset through creation of habitat of equal value. Compensation rate for habitat re-creation shall be determined by a qualified biologist.	• Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan • Tree Preservation Ordinance • Consultation on Fish and Wildlife Impacts • CEQA
R1.2	Rare and Endangered Species. Limit development in areas that support rare and endangered species. If development of these areas must occur, any loss of habitat should be fully compensated on-site. If off-site mitigation is necessary, it should occur within the El Cerrito planning area whenever possible, and must be accompanied by plans and a monitoring program prepared by a qualified biologist.	• Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan • Open Space Preservation Program • CEQA
R1.3	Potential Environmental Impacts. Encourage development patterns that minimize impacts on the City's biological, visual and cultural resources, and integrate development with open space areas.	• Tree Preservation Ordinance • Open Space Preservation Program • Environmental Education Programs • CEQA

Also see Land Use Policy LU6.1.

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| <p>R1.4 Air Quality. Strive to achieve federal and state air quality standards by managing locally generated pollutants, coordinating with other jurisdictions and implementing measures to limit the increase of automobile trips in El Cerrito and the region.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Air Quality Strategies | <p><i>Also see Transportation Policies T1.1, T1.2, T1.7 and T2.1.</i></p> |
| <p>R1.5 Clean Energy Sources. Support efforts by public and private agencies to develop new sources of energy for all uses, heating and industrial activities as well as transportation that will be non-polluting of our atmosphere.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Air Quality Strategies | <p><i>Also see Community Design Policies CD4.4 and CD4.5 and Transportation Policies T1.1 and T2.1.</i></p> |
| <p>R1.6 Runoff Water Quality. Maintain, at a minimum, the water quality levels established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), implement Clean Water Program and NPDES requirements, and achieve the highest possible level of water quality reasonable for an urban environment in City creeks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water Quality Strategies | <p><i>Also see Land Use Policy LU6.4.</i></p> |
| <p>R1.7 Creek Protection. Preserve riparian vegetation, protect owners and buyers of property from erosion and flooding, and increase public access to the creeks. Lands adjacent to riparian areas should be protected as public or private permanent open space through dedication or easements.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Riparian and Stream Restoration Programs | |
| <p>R1.8 Creek Improvements. Accomplish design and improvements along creeks (Cerrito Creek, Baxter Creek, etc.) in consultation and cooperation with creek restoration and design professionals.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Riparian and Stream Restoration Programs | |

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| R1.9 | Development Near Creeks.
For development adjacent to creeks and major drainages, provide adequate building setbacks from creek banks, provision of access easements for creek maintenance purposes and for public access to creekside amenities, and creek improvements such as bank stabilization. Also protect riparian vegetation outside the setback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Regulations (zoning) • Development Review • Creek Ordinance • CEQA |
| R1.10 | Cerrito Creek and Baxter Creek. In implementing improvements to Cerrito Creek, follow design objectives established in 1996 by the City Council. Similarly, establish a set of design objectives that are specific to Baxter Creek. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council Resolution 96-103 • Design Objectives for Baxter Creek • Creek Ordinance |
| R1.11 | Native Plant Communities. Encourage use of native plant species for landscaping in hillside areas, preserve unique plant communities, and use fire-preventive landscaping techniques. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan • Hillside Ordinance |
| R1.12 | Ridgelines Protection in East Richmond Heights Area. Control development on ridges to protect the form of the ridges and, in particular, by restricting development on ridgelines. Natural contours and vegetation on ridgelines should be maintained. Locate and design structures and other public and private improvements so as to minimize cut and fill areas that will impact public views, safety and surrounding uses, and avoid building profiles (silhouettes) being located above the ridgeline when viewed from public streets and designated public access areas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space Preservation Program • CEQA |

R1.13 View Protection and Vista Points.

Preserve prominent views of visual resources and the bay, and consider visual access and view corridors when reviewing development proposals. Require assessment of critical public views, ridgelines, scenic overlooks, Bay vista points, significant knolls, stands of trees, rock outcrops, and major visual features as part of the project review process to assure that projects protect natural resources through proper site planning, building design and landscaping, and that public access is provided if possible to vista points.

- Open Space Preservation Program

Also see Community Design Policy CD1.7.

R1.14 Continued Inter-Agency Cooperation in Environmental Resource

Protection: Ensure that the mandatory referral process is utilized by all governmental projects prior to any authorization, and that the cities, county, and appropriate agencies initiate cooperative studies, when needed, in matters pertaining to open space and environmental resource protection.

- CEQA
- Intergovernmental Coordination

R1.15 Joint Watershed Partnership. Assure coordination between the cities of El Cerrito, Albany, Berkeley, and Richmond, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the University of California at Berkeley to restore the watershed of the joint jurisdictions to a healthy condition. Cooperate closely to achieve the goals expressed in The Joint Watershed Goals Statement.

- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Joint Watershed Goals Statement

Goal R2: Protected and rehabilitated architectural, historical, cultural, and archaeological resources that are of local, state, or federal significance.

Also see Community Design Policies CD1.1 and CD1.5.

Policies

Implementation Measures

R2.1	Historic Preservation. Ensure that the remodeling and renovation of historic structures respects the character of the structure and its setting.	• Historic Preservation Ordinance • Development Review • Historical Inventory and Designation • Archaeological Resources • Development Regulations (zoning)
R2.2	Development Approvals. Ensure that all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to such resources are observed in the granting of development approvals.	• Historic Preservation Ordinance • Development Review • Design Guidelines • CEQA
R2.3	Vegetation. Include significant trees and other plant materials in the definition of significance.	• Historic Preservation Ordinance • Design Guidelines
R2.4	Coordination. Coordinate City preservation activities with appropriate community groups and state and federal agencies.	• Historic Preservation Ordinance
R2.5	Public Awareness. Promote public awareness of significant resources through educational programs, tours, markers, and other appropriate measures.	• Historic Preservation Ordinance

HAZARDS

A. Setting

The policies below address issues related to geologic and seismic risk, flooding, hazardous materials and noise. The element covers two state mandated general plan elements, safety and noise. The purpose of the element is to identify and appraise hazards in the community that will establish a basis for the goals, policies and implementing actions necessary to assure community safety. Other issues such as disaster preparedness, fire and crime prevention will be addressed in more detail in the Public Facilities and Services section of the General Plan.

El Cerrito lies on the southwest facing slopes of the Berkeley Hills, rising from the Bay Plain to the top of the ridgeline (approximate elevation 900 feet). Several faults run roughly parallel to the ridgeline, with an extensive portion of the Alquist-Priolo fault zone mostly located in the City of El Cerrito. Potential health and safety hazards due to earthquake, other geologic conditions, fire, noise and flooding exist in El Cerrito. These conditions are summarized below.

Earthquake

There is a probability of roughly one in four of a large earthquake (magnitude 7 or greater) occurring in the next thirty years along each of the two Hayward fault segments, as well as the peninsula segment of the San Andreas Fault. The Working Group on California Earthquake Probabilities (1990) has estimated that there is only a 2 percent chance of a magnitude 8 earthquake occurring on the nearby segment of the San Andreas Fault within the next 30 years.

Other Geologic Hazards

From a geologic and geotechnical standpoint, the primary concerns in El Cerrito are: (1) slope stability; (2) earthquake ground shaking; (3) fault ground rupture; and (4) liquefaction potential. According to the Tri-Cities Seismic Safety Study (Bishop 1973), virtually all of the upland areas of El Cerrito have a moderate to high landslide risk. The highest risk for groundshaking is in the flatter areas, which have shallow alluvium. Several small areas along Baxter and Cerrito creeks are identified as having a high liquefaction potential.

Fire Hazards

El Cerrito's intermix of urban housing and wildland areas increases the community's risk of loss from a devastating fire. The City's Fire Hazard Reduction Program addresses hazard reduction in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity zones of the city, requiring that property owners take special precautions with their properties, including vegetation management, to reduce the risk of fire. In addition, creation of a buffer zone interface between developed areas and the East Bay Regional Park District open space and City parks should occur to reduce the risk of fire.

Areas Prone to Flooding

There have been a number of large storms in El Cerrito that have caused drainage problems and flooding in the past. Recent completion of the first phase in the City's storm drain master plan program has addressed the highest priority sites and significantly reduced localized flooding issues in the city. During the past year of heavy rains, only three sites had drainage-related flooding problems. The only portion of El Cerrito located in a FEMA Flood Insurance Zone is the area located west of San Pablo Avenue and south of Central Avenue. Flooding is generally caused by the relatively low ground elevations and high tides in this area, coupled with hydraulic restrictions in the existing downstream channels located in Richmond between El Cerrito and San Francisco Bay.

Noise

The major noise sources in the City of El Cerrito are vehicular and rail traffic. Noise generated by vehicular traffic in El Cerrito is greatest along Interstate 80 and San Pablo Avenue. In most cases there will not be significant increases in noise from these sources. BART trains are a significant noise source in El Cerrito, but are different in nature from vehicular noise because they are characterized by numerous discrete, periodic events during train pass-bys. Studies indicate that after entering or leaving the Del Norte BART Station, BART trains produce maximum noise levels typically in the range of 72 to 76 dBA. Further away from the station, where BART trains travel faster, maximum noise levels typically range from 75 to 80 dBA. Residents also complain about BART noise where the tracks curve in the northern end of the City.

Land uses that are most sensitive to external noise sources include schools and libraries, hospitals and convalescent homes, churches and outdoor recreation areas. Other sensitive uses are residential and public facilities located near transportation links such as BART, San Pablo Avenue, or the Freeway.

B. Trends

Hazards - General

The intent of the General Plan is to reduce the potential for injury, damage, public expense, and loss of life due to natural and man-made hazards. The concept of public safety expressed in the General Plan is based on the following assumptions:

1. Hazards are an unavoidable aspect of life. Not every degree of risk or all hazards can be eliminated.
2. Public policy and action are appropriate to mitigate against hazards which: (a) have a high degree of risk to the general public or to a large part of the population; (b) may have relatively low risk but which would be considered disasters should the event occur; and (c) may not have a disaster potential but which are persistent safety problems with a history of occurring in the City.

The extent of the hazard depends on local conditions, since most hazards are confined to a particular area or site. Various health and safety hazards should be considered in planning the location, design, intensity, density and type of land uses in a given area. Long-term costs to the City, such as maintenance, liability exposure and emergency services, are potentially greater where high hazards exist.

The 1975 General Plan provided the framework and direction for development of more detailed studies, policies, and programs, including designation of the Hillside Natural Area and other open space areas; preparation of the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan; preparation of the Storm Water Master Plan; designation of Very High Fire Hazard Severity zones; and development of the City's Fire Hazard Reduction Program. The 1999 update reflects these plans and programs as well as respond to other issues of community concern. In addition, Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services, contains policies and programs covering fire hazards. It is important that coordination and review of resource and environmental hazard protection implementing measures continue to occur in El Cerrito. (See Figure 13)

Noise

The noise portion of the General Plan is concerned with planning for land uses that are typically sensitive to noise impacts, including residential development, residential neighborhood quality of life, nursing homes, schools, wildlife sanctuaries, hospitals and treatment centers. Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Whether a sound is unwanted depends on when and where it occurs, what the listener is doing when it occurs, characteristics of the sound (loudness, pitch and duration, speech or music content, irregularity) and how intrusive it is above background sound levels. Examples of potential noise generators in residential neighborhoods include, among others, I-80, BART, retail center operations and the location of play areas (such as school and park play areas). The Noise portion of the General Plan will establish the basis for code enforcement and regulation through the proposed adoption of a noise ordinance to control nuisances such as off-hour truck unloading and trash pickup, barking dogs, loud music and vehicle noise.

The normally acceptable noise standards for new land uses are established in Table 7-1, Land Use Compatibility for Community Exterior Noise Environments. This table defines the acceptable noise environment for the uses listed – it does not refer to the noise generated by the uses listed.

Table 7-2 shows existing (1998) and projected (2020) noise levels for BART, I-80 and San Pablo Avenue. The projected increase in noise levels along other City streets is projected to be less than 1 decibel (dB), which is less than noticeable. It should be noted that the projected increase in traffic on I-80 will be offset by a decrease in the average travel speed and noise levels are not projected to increase over existing levels.

Figure 7-1 Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments**Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments**

Land Use Type	Exterior Noise Exposure (Ldn or CNEL, dB)					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential, Hotels and Motels	Normally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	
Outdoor Sports and Recreation, Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	Normally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	
Schools, Libraries, Museums, Hospitals, Personal Care, Meeting Halls, Churches	Normally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	
Office Buildings, Business Commercial, and Professional	Normally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters	Conditionally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities and Agriculture	Conditionally Acceptable		Conditionally Acceptable		Unacceptable	

Normally Acceptable

Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.

Conditionally Acceptable

Specified land use may be permitted only after detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

Unacceptable

New construction or development should generally not be undertaken because mitigation is usually not feasible to comply with Noise Element policies.



Drawing prepared by MIG, Inc. 800 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94710

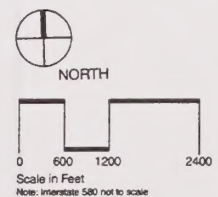


Figure 13 NATURAL HAZARDS

Table 7-2 Existing and General Plan Buildout Noise Contour Distances

Interstate 80 with Soundwalls	
Ldn (dB)	Distance from Centerline (feet)
70	140
65	320
60	1100
<i>Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., 1999</i>	

Interstate 80 without Soundwalls	
Ldn (dB)	Distance from Centerline (feet)
80	150
75	400
70	1200
65	3000
60	6500
<i>Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., 1999</i>	

BART (Existing and Projected)	
Ldn (dB)	Distance from Centerline (feet)
70	30
65	150
60	320
<i>Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., 1999</i>	

San Pablo Avenue (Existing and Projected)		
Ldn (dB)	Distance from Centerline (feet)	Distance from Centerline (feet)
	Existing	General Plan Buildout
70	45	55
65	140	175
60	300	380
<i>Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., 1999</i>		

C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described in the following section of this chapter.

Goal H1: Minimal potential for loss of life, injury, damage to property, economic and social dislocation and unusual public expense due to natural and man-made hazards, including protection from the risk of flood damage, hazards of soil erosion, fire hazards, weak and expansive soils, potentially hazardous soils materials, other hazardous materials, geologic instability, seismic activity, and release of hazardous materials from refineries and chemical plants in West County.

Policies	Implementation Measures
H1.1 Location of Future Development. Permit development only in those areas where potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the community can be adequately mitigated.	• Building Code Update • Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • CEQA
H1.2 Development Review. Require appropriate studies to assess identified hazards and assure that impacts are adequately mitigated.	• Building Code Update • Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Geotechnical Review Procedures • CEQA
H1.3 Geotechnical Review. Require geotechnical studies for development proposals in potentially hazardous areas; such studies should determine the actual extent of geotechnical hazards, optimum location for structures, the advisability of special structural requirements, and the feasibility and desirability of a proposed facility in a specified location.	• Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Geotechnical Review Procedures

*Also see Land Use Policy
LU6.1.*

H1.4	Soils and Geologic Review. Require soils and geologic review of development proposals as mapped in accordance with City procedures to assess potential seismic hazards, liquefaction, landsliding, mudsliding, erosion, sedimentation and settlement in order to determine if these hazards can be adequately mitigated.	• Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Geotechnical Review Procedures
H1.5	Erosion Control. Provide appropriate control measures in conjunction with proposed development in areas susceptible to erosion, including an erosion control plan and revegetation plan as part of grading permits, and ensure that mineral production be planned and carried out to avoid destruction or degradation of the environment.	• Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan • Development Review • Design Guidelines
H1.6	Development on Steeper Slopes. As a soil conservation and flood prevention measure, slopes exceeding 30 percent in steepness should be developed with extreme caution and should be designed to control erosion and runoff.	• Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Plan • Development Review • Hillside Ordinance
H1.7	Geological Hazards Mitigation. Require all geologic hazards be adequately addressed and mitigated through project development. Development proposed within areas of potential geological hazards shall not be endangered by, nor contribute to, the hazardous conditions on the site or on adjoining properties.	• Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Geotechnical Review Procedures
H1.8	Seismic Safety. Assure existing and new structures are designed to contemporary standards for seismic safety. Review, amend, and update, at regular intervals, all relevant City codes and ordinances to incorporate the most current knowledge and highest standards of seismic safety.	• Building Code Update • Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Geotechnical Review Procedures • Unreinforced Masonry Buildings

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| H1.9 | Potential Hazardous Soils Conditions.
Evaluate new development on sites that may have involved hazardous materials (such as older fill sites, historical auto service uses, industrial uses, or areas where hazardous materials may have been used) prior to development approvals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Materials Storage Tanks ● Hazardous Soils |
| H1.10 | Hazardous Materials Storage and Disposal. Require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials in accordance with all State, Federal and local laws and regulations to prevent leakage, potential explosions, fires, or the escape of harmful gases, and to prevent individually innocuous materials from combining to form hazardous substances, especially at the time of disposal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Waste Management ● Hazardous Materials Storage Tanks ● Hazardous Soils |
| H1.11 | Hazardous Waste Management.
Support measures to responsibly manage hazardous waste to protect public health, safety and the environment, and support state and federal safety legislation to strengthen requirements for hazardous materials transport. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Waste Management ● Transportation of Hazardous Materials |
| H1.12 | Hazardous Materials Usage. Minimize the use of toxic and hazardous materials. Encourage the use of safer alternative materials and practices, and advise builders on applying for any programs for non-toxic building materials incentives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Waste Management |
| H1.13 | Clean Environment. Provide information to the community regarding the potential health hazards posed by pollution and possible solutions. Such educational programs sponsored by educational institutions should also be supported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Waste Management |
| H1.14 | Regional Agencies Coordination.
Cooperate with and to promote the efforts of regional organizations in their efforts to clean up the environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hazardous Waste Management |

Also see Community Design Policy CD3.5.

In addition to Policies H1.17 through H1.19, Chapter 6 also contains fire protection and emergency preparedness policies and implementation measures.

Also see Public Services Policies PS2.1 through PS2.11.

H1.15	Flood Hazards. Assure existing and new structures are designed to protect people and property from the threat of potential flooding. New development shall be designed to provide protection from potential impacts of flooding during the “1% chance” or “100-year” flood.	• Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps
H1.16	Maintenance for the City’s Storm Drainage Facilities. In order to maintain unobstructed drainage courses, existing laws prohibiting the dumping of debris, fill or other waste materials into creeks and channels, and the littering of garbage should be strictly enforced. The City will also continue to maintain a high level of maintenance for its storm drainage facilities. New developments will be carefully reviewed to insure that adequate storm drain facilities are available both on and off the site.	• Storm Drainage Facilities • Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions in Solving Storm Drainage Problems
H1.17	Storm Drainage Capacity. Ensure storm drainage capacity to be available to carry runoff generated by new developments, and implement the City’s Storm Water Master Plan.	• Storm Drainage Facilities • Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions in Solving Storm Drainage Problems
H1.18	Rise in Sea Level. Coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal agencies regarding potential rise in sea level.	• Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions in Solving Storm Drainage Problems
H1.19	Standards of Fire Safety. Review, amend, and update, at regular intervals, all relevant City codes and ordinances to incorporate the most current knowledge and highest standards of fire safety. The City should also review at adequate intervals, the adequacy of existing fire service facilities throughout the community in relation to such factors as hydrant capacity, peak load water requirements, fire access roads to wildland areas, and other fire protection factors.	• Building Code Update • Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps • Emergency Preparedness Planning

- H1.20 Fire Hazard Reduction Program.** Promote fire safety in El Cerrito through fire prevention programs and public information programs. Emphasis should be given to programs devoted to the following:
1. Very High Fire Hazard Severity zones in the City as they relate to definable fire and fire safety hazards.
 2. Map high hazard areas.
 3. Strengthen existing codes in relation to such high hazard areas.
- Building Code Update
 - Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps
 - Emergency Preparedness Planning
- H1.21 Fire Retardant Landscaping.** Encourage the use of fire-retardant vegetation for landscaping, especially in high fire hazard areas.
- Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps
 - Emergency Preparedness Planning
- H1.22 Hillside Natural Area.** Control vegetation growth in the Hillside Natural Area to reduce fire hazards.
- Annual Budget

Goal H2: Government agencies, citizens and businesses are prepared for an effective response and recovery in the event of emergencies or disasters.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- H2.1 Hazard Awareness.** Publicize disaster plans and promote resident awareness and caution regarding hazards, including soil instability, earthquakes, flooding, and fire.
- Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps
 - Emergency Preparedness Planning
 - Release of Hazardous Materials

- H2.2

Public Facilities. Locate and design emergency buildings (police, fire, hospital, etc.) and vital utilities, communication systems and other public facilities so that they remain operational during and after an emergency or disaster.
- Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps
 - Emergency Preparedness Planning

Goal H3: New development complies with the noise standards established in the General Plan, all new noise sources are within acceptable standards, and existing objectionable noise sources are reduced or eliminated.

Policies

Implementation Measures

- H3.1

Noise Levels in New Residential Projects. New residential development projects shall meet acceptable exterior noise level standards. The "normally acceptable" noise standards for new land uses are established in Table 7-1, Land Use Compatibility for Community Exterior Noise Environments, which shall be modified by Policies H3.2 through H3.12, below.
- Noise Standards Review
 - State Noise Insulation Standards
 - CEQA

- H3.2 Outdoor Noise Levels.** The goal for maximum outdoor noise levels in residential areas is an Ldn of 60 dB. This level is a requirement to guide the design and location of future development and is a goal for the reduction of noise in existing development. However, 60 Ldn is a goal that cannot necessarily be reached in all residential areas within the realm of economic or aesthetic feasibility. This goal will be applied where outdoor use is a major consideration (e.g., backyards in single-family housing developments and recreation areas in multi-family housing projects). The outdoor standard will not normally be applied to the small decks associated with apartments and condominiums but these will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Where the city determines that providing an Ldn of 60 dB or lower outdoors is not feasible, the outdoor goal may be increased to an Ldn of 65 dB at the discretion of the Planning Commission.
- Noise Standards Review
 - State Noise Insulation Standards
- H3.3 Indoor Noise Levels.** The indoor noise level as required by the State of California Noise Insulation Standards must not exceed an Ldn of 45 dB in new housing units.
- Noise Standards Review
 - State Noise Insulation Standards
- H3.4 Indoor Instantaneous Noise Levels.** Interior noise levels in new single-family and multi-family residential units exposed to an Ldn of 60 dB or greater should be limited to a maximum instantaneous noise level in the bedrooms of 50 dBA. Maximum instantaneous noise levels in other rooms should not exceed 55 dB. The typical repetitive maximum instantaneous noise level at each site would be determined by monitor. Examples would include truck passbys on busy streets, BART passbys and train warning whistles.
- Noise Standards Review
 - State Noise Insulation Standards

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| H3.5 | Impacts of BART Noise. If the noise source is BART, then the outdoor noise exposure criterion should be 70 Ldn for future development, recognizing that BART noise is characterized by relatively few loud events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BART Noise |
| H3.6 | New Commercial, Industrial and Office Noise Standards. Appropriate interior noise levels in commercial, industrial, and office buildings are a function of the use of space and shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Interior noise levels in offices generally should be maintained at 45 Leq (hourly average) or less. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noise Standards Review ● State Noise Insulation Standards |
| H3.7 | Areas Below Desired Noise Standards. These guidelines are not intended to be applied reciprocally. In other words, if an area currently is below the desired noise standards, an increase in noise up to the maximum should not necessarily be allowed. The impact of a proposed project on an existing land use should be evaluated in terms of the increase in existing noise levels and potential for adverse community impact, regardless | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noise Standards Review ● State Noise Insulation Standards |
| H3.8 | Non-Transportation Related Noise Sources. For non-transportation related noise sources, noise levels outdoors should not exceed the limits in the table above. Interior noise levels shall be 15 decibels lower than those shown in the table. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noise Standards Review ● State Noise Insulation Standards |

H3.9**Noise Environment in Existing**

Residential Areas. Protect the noise environment in existing residential areas. In general, the City will require the evaluation of mitigation measures for projects under the following circumstances:

1. The project would cause the Ldn to increase 3 dB(A) or more.
2. Any increase would result in an Ldn greater than 60 dB(A).
3. The Ldn already exceeds 60 dB(A).
4. The project has the potential to generate significant adverse community response.

- Noise Standards Review
- State Noise Insulation Standards
- Noise Ordinance

H3.10**Mitigating the Effects of Noise on**

Adjacent Properties. Require proposals to reduce noise impacts on adjacent properties by incorporating appropriate measures into the project.

- Noise Standards Review
- State Noise Insulation Standards
- Noise Ordinance

H3.11**Commercial or Industrial Source**

Noise. Noise created by commercial or industrial sources associated with new projects or developments shall be controlled so as not to exceed the noise level standards set forth in the table below (Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure for Stationary Noise Sources), as measured at any affected residential land use.

- Noise Standards Review
- State Noise Insulation Standards
- Noise Ordinance

Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure for Stationary Noise Sources (1)

	Daytime (5) (7 AM to 10 PM)	Nighttime (2,5) (10 PM to 7 AM)
Hourly Leq, DB (3)	55	45
Maximum Level, dB (3)	70	65
Maximum Level, dB - Impulsive Noise (4)	65	60

(1) As determined at the property line of the receiving land use. When determining the effectiveness of noise mitigation measures, the standards may be applied on the receptor side of noise barriers or other property line noise mitigation measures.

(2) Applies only where the receiving land use operates or is occupied during nighttime hours.

(3) Sound level measurements shall be made with "slow" meter response.

(4) Sound level measurements shall be made with "fast" meter response.

(5) Allowable levels shall be raised to the ambient noise levels where the ambient levels exceed the allowable levels. Allowable levels shall be reduced 5 dB if the ambient hourly Leq is at least 10 dB lower than the allowable level.

H3.12**New Noise Reducing Technologies.**

Support and employ new noise reducing technologies in the development and maintenance of local and regional infrastructure.

- Noise Standards Review
- State Noise Insulation Standards

IMPLEMENTATION

The following is a summary of the major tools available to the City for implementation of the policies in this chapter, Resources and Hazards.

1. **Air Quality Strategies.** Implement trip reduction and energy conservation measures for jobs/housing balance, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and transit, as identified in the Community Design and Development, and Housing Elements, and coordinate with regional and state agencies and other West County jurisdictions in enhancing air quality.
2. **Annual Budget.** The annual budget should provide adequate funds for community facilities, infrastructure, and services. In particular, it should place a high priority on the inspection and maintenance of recreational facilities, especially on ensuring the safety of these facilities. Once the existing problems of deferred maintenance are corrected, it should be avoided because it inevitably leads to higher costs.
3. **Archaeological Resources.** Where possible, archaeological sites or fragile historic sites will be placed within open space areas as defined during the specific project review process.
4. **BART Noise.** Continue to work with-BART on noise reduction programs, placing special emphasis on noise reduction adjacent to noise sensitive uses. (i.e., public library, Fairmont School, Civic Center and residences within 200 feet of BART right-of-way)
5. **Building Code Update.** Update the Building and other codes as necessary to address earthquake, fire and other hazards and support programs for the identification, abatement or mitigation of existing hazardous structures.
6. **CEQA.** The City should ensure that the CEQA review process adequately identifies impacts of new development upon the natural environment.
7. **City Council Resolution 96-103.** The following objectives were adopted by City Council Resolution 96-103, and are summarized below:
 - a. Create a strong relationship between the creek and adjacent land by integrating retail, housing and civic uses with the creek, and improving the creek as an amenity.
 - b. Create a continuous pedestrian/bicycle corridor along the creek, linking this segment to creek alignments to the west and east.
 - c. Link a creekside pedestrian/bicycle corridor along Cerrito Creek to the Bay Trail.
 - d. Provide opportunities for visual and physical linkages between Albany and El Cerrito.
 - e. Create an open natural channel along its entire length within the Plaza area.

- f. Restore the creek channel as a natural riparian corridor with habitat enhancement.
 - g. Provide variety of uses and diversity of experiences along the creek alignment.
 - h. Extend the open creek channel to San Pablo Avenue and investigate the potential to realign the creek north of the Wells Fargo building, and to make a visible connection across San Pablo Avenue.
 - i. Provide for physical access by pedestrians to the creek channel.
8. **Consultation on Fish and Wildlife Impacts.** The City will continue to notify and consult with the California Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps of Engineers when development projects are proposed in locations where there may be impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitats.
9. **Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions in Solving Storm Drainage Problems.** Work with other agencies, such as the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County, to address downstream drainage problems. Such jurisdictions should be encouraged to participate and help solve such drainage problems. In the event that Kensington decides to install new storm drainage facilities, El Cerrito should review the plans to insure that the proposed system will be compatible with the design and capacity of El Cerrito's system and to encourage contributions to any adjacent system changes as a result of such plans.
10. **Creek Ordinance.** Consider adoption of a creek ordinance applicable city-wide to waterways to be specified, to include, among other factors, such provisions as setbacks of construction including buildings and paved areas; avoidance of culverting; standards for waterway restoration; and principles of watershed management.
11. **Design Objectives for Baxter Creek.** A set of objectives should be adopted by the council for Baxter Creek, similar to Resolution 96-103. Objectives might include:
 - a. Improve the natural channel characteristics.
 - b. Maintain and improve the riparian habitat.
 - c. Improve and maintain water quality in the creek channel.
 - d. Integrate the Baxter Creek corridor with the Ohlone Greenway and establish a connection with the proposed Central Richmond Greenway.
 - e. Provide for physical access by pedestrians to the creek channel.
 - f. Establish a creek corridor through public ownership of a conservation easement or other interest in a portion of the property through which the creek flows.
 - g. Establish setbacks for buildings and other improvements, through special regulations or a general Citywide creek protection ordinance.

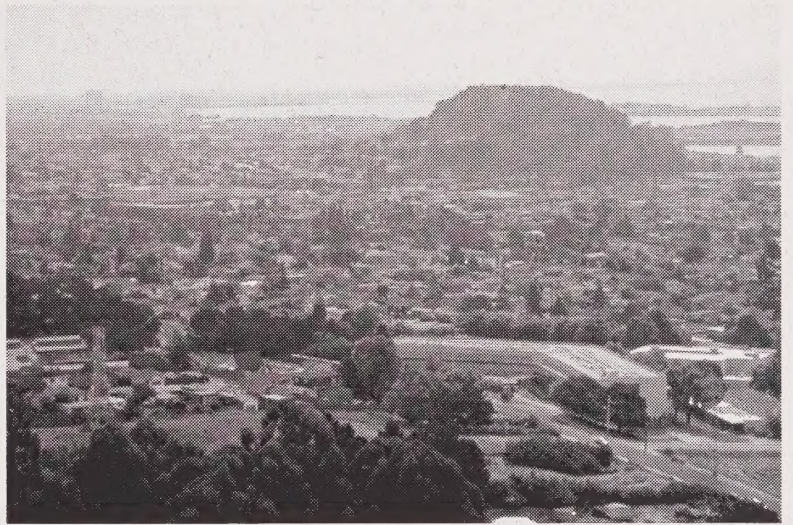
12. **Design Guidelines.** Design guidelines are very useful tools for ensuring that development is compatible with the surrounding area and that it provides required design features. To the extent possible, the guidelines should be specific; guidelines that are quantifiable should be considered for incorporation into the development regulations.
13. **Development Regulations (zoning).** The development regulations, primarily the zoning regulations, provide the standards for development, prescribe allowable uses, contain specific incentive provisions, and include other standards and procedures related to approval of development projects.
14. **Development Review.** The development review process includes discretionary review by the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, based on consideration of General Plan objectives and policies, and criteria established by the zoning and subdivision ordinances and other city regulations and adopted guidelines. Most discretionary actions are subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The development review process also includes administrative review of projects to verify compliance with Planning Commission and Design Review Board requirements, as well as standards set by the City through adoption of building and fire codes, engineering standards, and other regulations and ordinances.
15. **Emergency Preparedness Planning.** Continue to implement emergency preparedness plans in coordination with the County Office of Emergency Services regarding the provision of emergency services in the event of a large earthquake or other disaster. Continue to organize a comprehensive grassroots emergency preparedness plan using volunteer to organize neighborhood-level disaster response and preparation.
16. **Environmental Education Programs.** Establish public information/education programs to enhance public knowledge about environmental protection and conservation measures.
17. **Geologic, Fire, Flooding and Other Hazard Maps.** Maintain detailed hazard maps for use in development review.
18. **Geotechnical Review Procedures.** Update City guidelines establishing geotechnical review procedures, including but not limited to, the content of geologic feasibility reports and design level geotechnical reports, and the credentials of the authors of such reports. Considerations include:
 - a. Implement procedures and requirements of the state-established Alquist-Priolo zone.
 - b. Establish procedures addressing the type(s) of investigation, minimum report guidelines, minimum standards, technical review of reports submitted to the City, and enforcement of recommendations contained in the reports and City policy.

- c. Define types of projects and areas within the planning area that trigger report requirements for engineering geologic and/or geotechnical (soil and foundation engineering) reports to address these concerns.
 - d. Require engineering geologic reports: (a) for certain projects within a Fault Studies Zone; and (b) for certain projects in hillside and flatland areas and within 50 feet of creekbanks.
 - e. Require geotechnical reports for: (a) additions imposing significant new loads on existing foundations; (b) projects involving significant grading, particularly where located on a slope (e.g. swimming pools, basements); (c) repair of foundation distress; (d) landslide repairs; and (e) repair of distressed retaining walls over 4 feet in height.
 - f. Require the engineering geologist of record (where one is required on the project) to be an engineering geologist certified by the State of California.
 - g. Require the geotechnical consultant of record to be a registered civil engineer who holds a valid authorization to use the title "soil engineer" as provided in Section 6736.1 of the State of California Business and Professions Code.
 - h. Continually revise the existing database to indicate those sites with geologic/geotechnical reports on file.
19. **Hazardous Materials Storage Tanks.** A comprehensive investigation of hazardous materials storage tanks should be undertaken for specific sites when development is proposed. The potential hazard of any tanks or former tank sites found should then be evaluated using California EPA and local regulatory guidelines, and remedied.
 20. **Hazardous Soils.** Sites within El Cerrito that are contaminated with hazardous substances should be remediated in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. If it is not feasible to fully remediate soils, land uses may be restricted to protect public health and safety.
 21. **Hazardous Waste Management.** Work with Contra Costa County, other cities in the county and other jurisdictions on implementing measures of the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.
 22. **Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan.** Implement the Hillside Natural Area Vegetation Management Plan in coordination with fire reduction programs.
 23. **Hillside Ordinance.** The City should examine its existing regulations regarding hillside development and assess other hillside ordinances, such as the City of Richmond's April 1997 Hillside Ordinance, to ensure that environmental and safety issues are properly addressed.

24. **Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Consider adopting a Historic Preservation Ordinance following procedures identified by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to protect historic resources and to ensure that new buildings and remodeling of existing buildings are compatible with City goals for preserving the City's historic resources and character. The City should also examine financial assistance options for eligible historic properties. The ordinance would:
- Establish standards for determining the historic value of potentially historic properties.
 - Define historic areas where new development will be required to complement the character of the surrounding historic structures.
 - Establish separate historic design guidelines that could be used to allow the adaptive re-use of historic buildings and facade improvements, and include guidelines and standards covering specific historical/architectural features, materials, colors, etc. for all new construction.
 - Address Unreinforced Masonry Building safety.
 - Establish exceptions from parking, lot coverage and setback requirements for historic buildings (through separate zoning amendment).
25. **Historical Inventory and Designation.** The City should initiate, or work with a local civic group to initiate, an inventory of structures or sites that may have architectural, historical, archeological, or cultural significance to the community. The City should then consider action to list the most significant structures or sites on the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places.
26. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** The City should continue to coordinate with other cities, Contra Costa and Alameda counties, and other agencies to ensure that environmental objectives are achieved.
27. **Joint Watershed Goals Statement.** Assure ongoing general cooperation in the furtherance of joint watershed goals as adopted by the City of El Cerrito on September 5, 1995, and seek out opportunities to jointly apply for grants and jointly undertake planning, construction, educational, and watershed management projects which will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the respective governing bodies. Joint Watershed Goals include:
- Restoring creeks by removing culverts, underground pipes, and obstructions to fish and animal migration, and putting creeks in restored channels up in the sunshine where people and wildlife can enjoy them.
 - Restoring creek corridors as natural transportation routes with pedestrian and bicycle paths along creekside greenways; wherever possible, using creekside greenways to connect neighborhoods and commercial districts east of Interstate 80 freeway to the shoreline of San Francisco Bay and the San Francisco Bay Trail.

- c. Restoring a healthy freshwater supply to creeks and the Bay by eliminating conditions that pollute rainwater as it flows overland to creeks, and eliminating conditions that prevent a healthy amount of rainwater from soaking into the ground and replenishing the underground water supplies that nourish creeks.
 - d. Instilling widespread public awareness of the value of developing infrastructure along lines that promote healthier watersheds and watershed-oriented open spaces where nature and community life can flourish.
28. **Noise Ordinance.** Adopt a noise ordinance to regulate noise-generating activities.
29. **Noise Standards Review.** Review development proposals to assure consistency with noise standards. The City will require the following and other means, as appropriate, to mitigate noise impacts on adjacent properties:
- a. Screen and control noise sources such as parking, outdoor activities and mechanical equipment.
 - b. Increase setbacks for noise sources from adjacent dwellings.
 - c. Wherever possible do not remove fences, walls or landscaping that serve as noise buffers, although design, safety and other impacts must be addressed.
 - d. Use soundproofing materials and double glazed windows.
 - e. Control hours of operation, including deliveries and trash pickup to minimize noise impacts.
- The City will use the Future Noise Contours data to determine if additional noise studies are needed for proposed development.
30. **Open Space Preservation Program.** See Implementation Section of Chapter 4.
31. **Release of Hazardous Materials.** Update emergency preparedness planning and education related to the release of hazardous materials from refineries and chemical plants in West County to take into account risk management plans of operators.
32. **Riparian and Stream Restoration Programs.** Establish priorities for riparian and stream restoration that include erosion control measures, stream clean-up, improved capacity and reliability of the City's storm drain system, and revegetation plans. Coordinate creek preservation with CEQA review, bicycle master plan, open space preservation actions, and grant funding.
33. **State Noise Insulation Standards.** Use the adopted Health and Safety Element as a guideline for compliance with the State's noise insulation standards by providing noise contour information around all major sources in support of the sound transmission control standards (Chapter 2-35, Part 2, Title 24, California Administrative Code).

34. **Storm Drainage Facilities.** Efforts should be made to provide funds for the improvement of the City's storm drainage facilities to meet the substantial cost of any such projects.
35. **Transportation of Hazardous Materials.** Work with Contra Costa County, other cities in the county and other jurisdictions in establishing standards for the transportation of hazardous wastes through West County and the City.
36. **Tree Preservation Ordinance.** Consider adoption of a tree preservation ordinance that will define types and size of trees to be protected, and will include specific criteria, procedures and mitigation when trees are proposed to be removed.
37. **Unreinforced Masonry Buildings.** Develop strategies for abatement of Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URMB) hazards consistent with Guidelines established by the California Seismic Safety Commission, with provisions for coordination with historic preservation.
38. **Water Quality Strategies.** Implement habitat protection programs and evaluate proposed projects for potential water quality impacts that may require sediment basins as part of grading activities, grease/oil traps where concentrations of such pollutants are anticipated, or other measures. In coordination with Contra Costa County, continue to implement measures consistent with the City's NPDES Stormwater Permit.



Chapter 8 Putting the Plan To Work

CHAPTER 8 PUTTING THE PLAN TO WORK

The true worth of a general plan is measured by how well it actually leads to achievement of its goals and policies. The strategic approach presented in Chapter 2 is intended to provide a focus for the City's implementation efforts. In addition, each policy in the Plan is accompanied by at least one implementation measure. These implementation measures are then summarized in a separate section following each set of goals and policies.

This chapter provides additional information on how the Plan implements state law and local policies, including how the plan can be maintained as an effective management tool after it is adopted. This General Plan is only the first step, but a critical one, in providing for the types of future development, facilities, and services desired by the city.

A. Moving from State Law to Local Policies

Under California law, cities are required to adopt general plans that include seven "elements" or topics: land use, circulation, housing, safety, open space, conservation, and noise. At their discretion, cities may adopt additional elements, such as economic development, community design, and parks and recreation.

This General Plan is organized into chapters, with several appendices containing technical or explanatory materials. The state-mandated elements are incorporated into the following chapters:

- Chapter 4, Community Development and Design, addresses land use, community design, housing, and growth management. The section on land use contains the future land use plan map and a description of the land use categories used in the plan. This chapter fulfills the state-mandated requirement for a land use element. The optional community design section discusses design issues and identifies special design areas. The state-mandated housing element is not part of the 1998-99 update, but will be updated in 2000-01. The complete housing element, adopted in 1991, is included as Appendix A. The growth management section is in response to a county initiative (Measure C) that links growth and infrastructure.
- Chapter 5, Transportation and Circulation, addresses the movement of people and materials by transit, automobiles and trucks, bicycles, and walking. This chapter fulfills the state-mandated requirement for a circulation element. Additional technical information on transportation is included in Appendix B.
- Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services, deals with three topics: parks and recreation, civic and community facilities, and public services and infrastructure.

These subjects are not mandated by state law but are included because of the City's intense interest in its parks and other recreation facilities, and because all public facilities and services are related to land use policies contained in Chapter 4.

- Chapter 7, Resources and Hazards, addresses natural and historic resources in its first major section. The natural resources discussion includes open space, wildlife, air quality, and storm runoff. The second major section addresses hazards—geologic hazards, fires, flooding, and noise. Chapter 7 fulfills the state-mandated requirements for open space, conservation, safety, and noise elements.

B. Consistency Requirements

State law provides cities with a variety of techniques for implementing general plans. It also requires that these implementation techniques be consistent with the general plan. The most important techniques and their relationship to the general plan are discussed below.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance and zoning map are parcel-specific statements of how land may be used and provide specific conditions that El Cerrito will impose, consistent with the overall policy framework of the General Plan and land use map. As such, zoning should not be confused with the General Plan or the land use map, which are not precise or parcel-specific and, therefore, may not show detailed land use distinctions nor, in all cases, reflect existing use of the land.

Government Code Section 65860 requires that a city's zoning ordinance be consistent with its general plan. Consistency means that various land uses authorized by the zoning ordinance, and the distribution of these permitted land uses, must serve to implement the goals and policies of the general plan. Specific zoning ordinance districts must correspond with the land use designations and the geographic extent of the designations presented on the land use map, even if they vary from actual existing conditions.

Subdivision Ordinance

Government Code Section 66410 *et seq.* requires that local jurisdictions regulate and control subdivision activity through adoption and use of a subdivision ordinance.

Section 66473.5 requires that a city shall not approve a proposed subdivision map unless the subdivision, including its design and proposed land uses, is consistent with the general plan. Similar to the consistency requirements of the zoning ordinance and map, consistency may be found only when the proposed subdivision is consistent with the goals, policies, and implementation programs included in the general plan. The subdivision consistency requirement applies to subdivisions for which parcel maps (minor subdivisions) are filed, as well as tentative and final maps.

Section 66474 specifically requires that a city shall deny approval of tentative and final maps if it finds that the proposed map, its design, or the proposed improvements are inconsistent with its general plan.

Capital Improvement Programs

Government Code 65401 requires the city council to obtain from city officials and staff, and from special districts operating within the city limits, lists of all public works projects recommended for study, design, or construction during each ensuing year. The list of public works projects is then organized into a coordinated program, called the capital improvement program (CIP). The CIP and its component projects must be reviewed by the city, and inconsistent projects must be deleted or modified to conform to the general plan.

Environmental Impact Review

The regulations implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Administrative Code Section 14100 *et seq.*, contain several references to the relationship of environmental review, as prescribed by CEQA, and the general plan. Section 15080 requires that the environmental review process be “combined with the existing planning, review, and project approval process” used by the city. Section 15125(b) requires environmental review to discuss any inconsistencies between a proposed project and the general plan. Projects should be found to have a significant adverse effect on the environment if they conflict “with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community”

Redevelopment

The City of El Cerrito has established a Redevelopment Project Area along San Pablo Avenue. State law (Health and Safety Code Sections 33302 and 33331) requires that El Cerrito’s Redevelopment Plan be in conformance with the City’s General Plan.

Other Consistency Requirements

State Housing Law (Health and Safety Code Sections 17910 *et seq.*) requires a city to adopt regulations imposing substantially the same standards as those contained in the various uniform industry codes. State law also imposes special standards, which may be more stringent than the uniform industry codes (e.g., the Uniform Building Code), designed to protect against certain types of hazards (fire, noise, earthquakes, unstable soils) and achieve certain resource management goals (such as energy conservation). El Cerrito may adopt regulations and standards that vary from those mandated by state law, if justified by local conditions. If such variance is appropriate, the General Plan can serve as the vehicle for documenting local conditions and specifying the necessary regulatory response.

C. Maintaining the General Plan

The traditional view of a general plan is that it is a more-or-less static document, updated about every 20 years, with much more emphasis on maps than on policies. This view is consistent with planning as practiced in many other countries where the government has much more control over land use than in the United States. The more contemporary view of general plans is that they are a management tool that must be kept up to date if they are to provide useful guidance for decision making in a rapidly changing economic environment.

In order to keep the plan up to date so that it is an effective management tool, the following measures should be implemented.

1. The City staff should prepare an annual report on the status of achieving the strategic action items listed in Chapter 2. This report should be brief and contain the following information:
 - Name of strategic action
 - Status
 - Current issues that need attention
 - Recommended changes in plans, policies, or regulations.

This report should be prepared prior to the City Council's annual goal setting session.

2. The City staff should prepare an evaluation report every five years—the evaluation report should address the following:
 - The degree to which each goal has been successfully reached
 - The effectiveness of each policy in reaching its goal or goals
 - Problems and opportunities that were unanticipated when the plan or most recent five year evaluation was developed
 - Data that is out of date to the extent that it inhibits the successful implementation of the General Plan
 - Recommended changes in the General Plan and to other plans, policies, and regulations.
3. The City staff should propose General Plan amendments as needed in order to maintain the Plan as an effective management tool.
4. The contents of the General Plan, all General Plan amendments, the Existing Conditions Report, and the Environmental Impact Report for this Plan must be easily accessible. At a minimum, at least the General Plan should be on the City's website. As part of the amendment process, it is highly desirable to replace superseded pages with revised pages in order to minimize confusion.
5. The General Plan should be used in the development of capital improvement programs, annual budgets, and, as applicable, personnel reviews.

D. Amending the General Plan

The City or private individuals can initiate General Plan amendments. The state law governing amendments is found beginning at Section 65350 of the Government Code. The law provides that the Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing before approving a written recommendation for a Plan amendment. The City Council must then hold at least one public hearing before approving an amendment. The state law provides for the type of notice that must be given for these hearing.

A General Plan amendment is subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and, therefore, may require an Environmental Impact Report or other environmental documentation. Periodic review of the entire General Plan is not required by state law but, as noted above, is highly recommended. The state law does require a review of the Housing Element every five years; these reviews normally will result in a Plan amendment.

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A

Housing Element

City of El Cerrito
General Plan Housing Element

Approved by the City Council
August 19, 1991

Resolution No. 91-73

Housing Element

City of El Cerrito

August 1991

August 1991

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Introduction

The Housing Element is a statement of El Cerrito's vision regarding existing and future housing needs. This Housing Element has been prepared to meet recent changes in the City's population and housing needs and to reflect the City Council's recently completed goal setting process and Project Listen.

The Housing Element consists of two major sections. Section one contains the goals, policies and implementation programs. Section two contains an analysis of the housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The goals and policies are based on the needs identified in section two.

The single most important goal of the El Cerrito Housing Element is to achieve an adequate supply of safe, decent housing for all residents of El Cerrito. In order to achieve this goal, the policies and programs of the Housing Element address several major issues:

- Maintenance and preservation of the existing housing stock;
- Retention of the character of El Cerrito's residential neighborhoods;
- Meeting the City's regional housing needs allocations; and
- Providing additional affordable housing, particularly for senior citizens.

The requirements of State Government Code Section 65583 are addressed in the Housing Element. The format of the Housing Element follows very specific State guidelines with respect to the subjects covered and the data that is analysed.

The City has a commitment to El Cerrito residents to maintain the identity and quality of the residential neighborhoods. At the same time, the City also recognizes that it must try to meet its share of regional housing needs. The Housing Element articulates El Cerrito's housing goals in relation to the constraints to housing development and to the housing market. The element establishes policies to guide decision-makers and implement comprehensive programs to meet community housing needs.

Housing Goals, Policies and Implementation Programs

Housing Goals

- Goal 1: Conserve and Improve El Cerrito's existing housing supply.
- Goal 2: Facilitate and encourage the development of housing to meet regional housing needs allocations established by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).
- Goal 3: Expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the handicapped, households with very low to moderate incomes and for persons with special housing needs.
- Goal 4: Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin or color.
- Goal 5: Adopt and implement a Housing Element that is in compliance with State Law and the requirements of the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Goals and Policies are general statements of direction El Cerrito will pursue for maintaining and increasing its housing. Each policy has one or more implementation programs which contain the following information:

1. A concise statement of the specific City actions which will be taken to implement the program;
2. The City department or other agency responsible for implementation;
3. Quantified objectives, where applicable; and
4. Schedule for completion.

Goal 1: Conserve and Improve El Cerrito's existing housing supply.

Policies to conserve and improve El Cerrito's existing housing supply

- P.1 Housing Rehabilitation: Pursue available funding for the preservation and rehabilitation of viable older housing to preserve neighborhood character and, where possible, retain a supply of low and moderate-income units.
- P.2 Displacement of Residential Units: Discourage the conversion of older residential uses to other uses or higher priced housing, unless there is a finding of clear public benefit and equivalent housing that can be provided for those who would be displaced by the proposed conversion.
- P.3 House Sharing: Encourage and facilitate house sharing programs.
- P.4 Condominium Conversions: Continue to prohibit conversion of existing multiple family residential units to market rate condominiums. Limited equity cooperatives and other innovative housing proposals which are affordable to low and moderate-income households are excepted.
- P.5 Non-conforming Mobile Home Parks: Encourage conversion of non-conforming mobile home parks to other uses, while providing a commensurate number of affordable units elsewhere.
- P.6 Relocation/Non-conforming Mobile Home Parks: Residents displaced from non-conforming mobile home parks shall be provided relocation assistance pursuant to State Law.
- P.7 Energy Conservation Improvements: Promote available energy conservation programs which provide assistance for energy conservation improvements.

Implementation Programs to conserve and improve El Cerrito's existing housing supply

- IP.1 Maintain Existing Residential Zoning: Retain existing residential zoning and discourage non-residential uses in these zones.
RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
FINANCING: CITY FUNDS
SCHEDULE: ONGOING
- IP.2 Certificate of Occupancy Program: Continue to implement the Certificate of Occupancy Permit Program for rental housing on a biennial basis to maintain the quality of the housing stock.
RESP. AGENCY: BUILDING DIVISION
FINANCING: CITY FUNDS
OBJECTIVES: INSPECT 1300 RENTAL UNITS BIANNUALLY
SCHEDULE: ONGOING
- [It is estimated that there are approximately 1300 rental units requiring inspection under the City's Certificate of Occupancy Permit Program.]

- IP.3 Condominium Conversions: Consider amendments to the existing Zoning Ordinance revising regulations for Condominium Conversions when this matter becomes an issue in the City. There has been no condominium conversions in El Cerrito since 1981. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that would be considered include: exempt limited equity residential cooperatives which provide long term affordability for the units; require relocation assistance when units are converted; and require first right of refusal by occupants.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
 FINANCING: CITY
 OBJECTIVES: N/A
 SCHEDULING: AS REQUIRED
- IP.4 Rehabilitation Preservation Program: Participate in the Neighborhood Preservation Program in cooperation with the Contra Costa County Housing Authority [CCCHA] which provides low interest loans for the rehabilitation of homes owned or occupied by low to moderate-income households. City will improve citizen awareness of this rehabilitation loan program by: a) making pamphlets on this program available at City Hall and at the public library; b) contact neighborhood groups in older residential areas with this information; and c) continuing building code enforcement. Use funding sources such as the Deferred Payment Rehabilitation Loan Program [DPRLP] as well as Redevelopment Tax Increment Set-Aside funds to implement this program.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING, BUILDING AND REDEVELOPMENT DIVISIONS.
 FINANCING: CITY & STATE FUNDS
 OBJECTIVES: REHABILITATE 50 UNITS @ YEAR FOR 5 YEARS
 SCHEDULING: ONGOING AND APPLY FOR DPRL PROGRAM BY JULY 1994
- IP.5 Housing Rehabilitation in Non-Conforming Areas: Continue to permit new housing units and housing rehabilitation in commercial zoning districts subject to an Administrative or a Commission Use Permit as specified in the Zoning Ordinance.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION.
 FINANCING: CITY
 SCHEDULING: ONGOING
- IP.6 Capital Improvement Program: The Planning Commission and City Council shall review on an annual basis it's Capital Improvement Program [CIP] to determine what special priorities are needed for capital improvement projects required to maintain the community's older residential neighborhoods. Review of the CIP shall also include verification that areas needing improvement are scheduled for funding to address these needs at a specific time in the future.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING DIVISIONS.
 FINANCING: CITY
 OBJECTIVES: SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS AS OUTLINED IN THE CIP FOR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.
 SCHEDULING: ANNUALLY AS AN ONGOING PROGRAM.

- IP.7 Shared Housing Programs: Contact the Shared Housing Association in Contra Costa County to determine whether they would be interested to implement such a program in El Cerrito.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
 FINANCING: CITY TO APPLY FOR AVAILABLE FUNDING; NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.
 OBJECTIVES: TO MATCH SENIOR CITIZENS LIVING ALONE IN SINGLE FAMILY HOMES WITH OTHERS SEEKING HOUSING.
 SCHEDULING: START PROGRAM: APRIL 1992.
- IP.8 Relocation of Mobile Home Residents: To the extent that redevelopment projects cause mobile home parks to be converted to other uses, ensure that residents of mobile home parks obtain relocation assistance pursuant to State Law and that they are referred to agencies such as the Contra Costa Housing Authority and the Contra Costa Community Services Department.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY.
 FINANCING: CITY AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
 OBJECTIVES: RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL SERVICES FOR APPROXIMATELY 100 PERSONS.
 SCHEDULING: AS REQUIRED BY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ACTIVITY

Goal 2: Facilitate and encourage the development of housing to meet regional housing needs allocations established by ABAG.

Policies to promote additional housing

- P.8 Pursue Available Funding Sources: Pursue county, state and federal programs and funding sources that provide housing opportunities for low and moderate-income households.
- P.9 Mixed Use: Encourage the development of residential uses in existing and new commercial areas where the viability of the commercial activities would not be adversely affected.
- P.10 Limited Equity Cooperatives: Encourage limited equity residential cooperatives and other non-profit enterprises such as sweat-equity projects designed to provide affordable housing.
- P.11 Large Scale Commercial & Office Projects: Consider impacts on housing demand in the Environmental Review process of large-scale commercial and office projects.
- P.12 Regional Housing Needs: Additional housing will be encouraged by means of actively encouraging the construction of multifamily housing located in Mixed Use projects in the redevelopment area to meet the City's Regional Housing Need Allocations pursuant to the Housing Opportunity Sites on Table 21.
- P.13 Second Dwelling Units: Continue to facilitate the construction of second dwelling units, pursuant to the City's Accessory Living Unit Ordinance.
- P.14 Adaptive Reuse: Identify and evaluate the reuse of underutilized or deteriorated buildings for conversion to Mixed Use developments comprised of housing mixed with retail, commercial or office uses.

IP.9 Mixed Use: Review the Mixed Use Zoning District to consider revisions to parking, setback, height, lot coverage and other standards to facilitate increased multifamily housing densities integrated with retail and commercial uses. Among the items to be considered are relaxation of parking standards where several land uses share a parking facility; exempt structured parking facilities from lot coverage or building height standards; and establish performance criteria.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION.

FINANCING: CITY

OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UP TO 1018 ADDITIONAL MULTIFAMILY HOUSING UNITS.

SCHEDULING: AMEND ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

[Requires the rezoning of portions of the Redevelopment Areas to Mixed Use District. The Incentives Program contained in the Zoning Ordinance provides considerable flexibility with regard to density and design.]

IP.10 Adaptive Reuse: Survey the City to identify underutilized and deteriorated buildings where adaptive reuse would be feasible. Prepare a report for Planning Commission and City Council with recommendations with specific strategies for adaptive reuse of identified building(s) taking into consideration the flexibility provided by the Mixed Use Zoning District, participation of the redevelopment agency, and the incentives provided by the density bonus provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

FINANCING: CITY

OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 15 ADDITIONAL HOUSING UNITS.
IF FEASIBLE..

SCHEDULING: COMPLETE SURVEY OF POTENTIAL ADAPTIVE REUSE BUILDINGS BY SEPTEMBER 1993

IP.11 Facilitate Second Dwelling Unit Construction: Review the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance and the number of such units that have been built in the past three years to determine what modifications of this section of the Zoning Ordinance may be required to increase the number of these units constructed. Consider fast-track processing for units meeting established standards; and preparing and distributing a brochure for the public on second units.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION

FINANCING: CITY AND HOUSING DEVELOPERS.

OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 10 SECOND DWELLING UNITS PER YEAR.

SCHEDULING: COMPLETE WITH ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS, JULY 1992

Goal 3: Expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the handicapped, households with very low to moderate incomes and for persons with special housing needs.

Policies to expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the handicapped, households with very low to moderate incomes and for persons with special housing needs.

- P.15 Facilitate additional Senior Housing: Senior housing projects may be developed with density bonuses and with less restrictive parking and setback requirements than specified in the Zoning Ordinance, where found to be consistent with maintaining the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- P.16 Housing for the Handicapped: Continue to facilitate housing for handicapped persons.
- P.17 Density Bonus Incentives: Continue to provide density bonuses to projects which provide the required percentage total units affordable to very-low and low-income households and for units meeting the special housing needs identified in this Element as specified by State law.
- P.18 Resale and Rental Controls on BMR Units: Require resale and rental controls on Below Market Rate [BMR] units.
- P.19 Large Families: Continue to provide incentives for the construction of additional housing for large families requiring 3 or more bedroom units in multifamily dwellings.
- P.20 Monitor Conversion of Section 8 to Market Rate Units: Work with the Contra Costa Housing Authority to monitor Section 8 and other affordable BMR units that are scheduled to be converted to market rate units and to develop programs preventing the loss of these affordable units.
- P.21 Emergency and Transitional Housing: Allow emergency and transitional shelter within the City as a permitted use in the C-2 Zoning District.
- P.22 Inter Agency Cooperation: Work with private, County, and State Agencies to provide emergency housing for the homeless.

Implementation Programs to expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the handicapped, households with very low to moderate incomes and for persons with special housing needs.

- IP.12 Additional housing for senior population: Continue to permit senior housing developments, for persons aged 55 and over, in specific residential and commercial areas with reduced parking, set-back and other requirements. [Utilize Incentives Program in the Zoning Ordinance, as appropriate, to achieve this implementation program.]

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION.
FINANCING: CITY
OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AT LEAST 100 SENIOR HOUSING UNITS.
SCHEDULING: ONGOING

[Quantitative objective based on the criteria that available parcels for senior multifamily housing should be between 2 and 3 acres in size, at a density of approximately 35 du/acre. This program may be combined with IP-13 below.]

- IP.13 Senior Housing: Designate an area or parcel of land suitable for senior housing funded by a HUD 202 or similar program. Work with developers to facilitate obtaining funding and construction of senior housing on this site.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
FINANCING: CITY
OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF 100 ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING UNITS.
SCHEDULING: DESIGNATE PARCEL WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS, JULY 1992.

- IP.14 Accessible Units for the Physically Handicapped: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require at least 5% of new residential projects comprising 25 or more units to be adapted to or built for handicapped persons consistent with Federal and State laws.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION.
FINANCING: CITY
OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP 51 HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE UNITS.
SCHEDULING: AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

[Quantitative objective based on 5% of the 1018 units that could be built in the redevelopment area.]

- IP.15 Large Families: Include in the revised Density Bonus provisions of the Zoning Ordinance specific incentives for the provision of housing with three or more bedrooms for large families. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to make housing developments with at least 10% of the units greater than three bedrooms eligible for 'fast track' processing.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION.
FINANCING: CITY
OBJECTIVE: TO ESTABLISH AT LEAST 50 HOUSING UNITS FOR LARGE FAMILIES.
SCHEDULING: AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

IP.16 Housing Fund: Continue to operate the Housing Fund. Contributions to the Housing Fund would come from Redevelopment Agency Set-Aside funds and funds collected from private and public sources to implement and/or supplement the City's housing programs. Use of the Housing Fund will be governed by guidelines as set out in the Zoning Ordinance and City Redevelopment regulations, where applicable. The possible uses and sources of funds for the Housing Fund are listed below:

- Land acquisition for Below Market Rate [BMR] housing;
- Capital improvements to BMR housing;
- Rehabilitation loans;
- Contribute to funds established for emergency and transitional housing;
- Replacement of waived or reduced City fees for BMR projects;
- Buy-downs on mortgages for purchasers of BMR units;
- Subsidize programs that provide housing units to compensate for low to moderate-income units lost through expiration of Section 8 agreements;
- Subsidize mortgage financing for Below Market Rate Units; and
- Other related implementation actions.

Funding Sources:

- Redevelopment Bonds and Housing Set-Aside funds;
- Federally sponsored Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] Funds; and
- Other City funds.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING AND FINANCE DEPARTMENTS, CITY MANAGER AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

FINANCING: CITY AND OTHER SOURCES LISTED ABOVE.

OBJECTIVE: TO PROVIDE THE FINANCIAL MEANS TO IMPLEMENT THE CITY'S HOUSING POLICIES.

SCHEDULING: AMEND ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

IP.17 Density Bonus: Revise the Incentives Program in the Zoning Ordinance to comply with the Density Bonus provisions of Gov't. Code § 65913.4 and 65917 requiring the granting of a density bonus and an additional financial incentive, or financially equivalent incentive(s), to a developer of housing agreeing to construct at least: a) 20% of the units for low-income households; b) 10% of the units for very-low income households; or c) 50% of the units for senior citizens.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION

FINANCING: CITY AND DEVELOPERS

OBJECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF 152 VERY LOW INCOME UNITS; 109 LOW INCOME UNITS, (THESE MAY BE IN THE FORM OF 261 SENIOR UNITS)

SCHEDULING: AMEND ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

[Quantified objective based on the the total amount of very low and low income units established by the ABAG Regional Housing Needs in Table 19. The 231 senior units are based on the need to provide 50% of the remaining 462 moderate and market rate units for senior citizens. The density bonus provisions of previous Element proved to be successful. The feasibility of this program is strengthened because the areas where these units would be built is located within a redevelopment area, where rapid transit facilities and infrastructure exist, and the City's Redevelopment Agency has a proven track record of providing affordable units and an active program to implement its housing objectives.]

IP.18 Implement Fast-Track Processing: Continue to implement fast-track processing for projects with affordable housing.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
FINANCING: CITY
SCHEDULING: ONGOING

[This program was contained in the previous Housing Element and has proven to be successful. The effectiveness of this program is augmented by the fact that most of the City's new housing will be located in the redevelopment area. Housing projects in the redevelopment areas have been expedited by Redevelopment Agency staff and assigned a top priority in the permit review process.]

IP.19 Redevelopment Agency: The Redevelopment Agency will continue to use its unique powers to actively encourage the development of affordable housing by providing technical and financial assistance to reduce the cost of housing. [The El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency is currently negotiating Development Agreements with developers to construct affordable housing units.]

RESP. AGENCY: REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
FINANCING: REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OBJECTIVE: TO OBTAIN AT LEAST 204 AFFORDABLE UNITS, REPRESENTING 20% OF THE 1018 POTENTIAL UNITS THAT COULD BE BUILT IN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA BY THE YEAR 2005 USING TAX-INCREMENT HOUSING SET ASIDE FUNDS.
SCHEDULING: ONGOING.

IP.20 Use available funding methods: Encourage additional affordable housing units, through for example, developer agreements, mortgage revenue bonds, Senior Citizens Shared Housing Program, Redevelopment Agency tax-exempt financing and the Deferred Payment Rehabilitation Loan Program.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION, CITY MANAGER AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
FINANCING: MORTGAGE REVENUE BONDS, DEVELOPER FEES, CITY STAFF TIME.
SCHEDULING: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND APPROPRIATE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED DURING FISCAL YEAR 1991-92.

IP.21 Maintain adequate staff: Maintain adequate staff in the Planning Division to process and review housing development applications in a timely manner, recognizing that delays in permit processing add to the cost of housing.

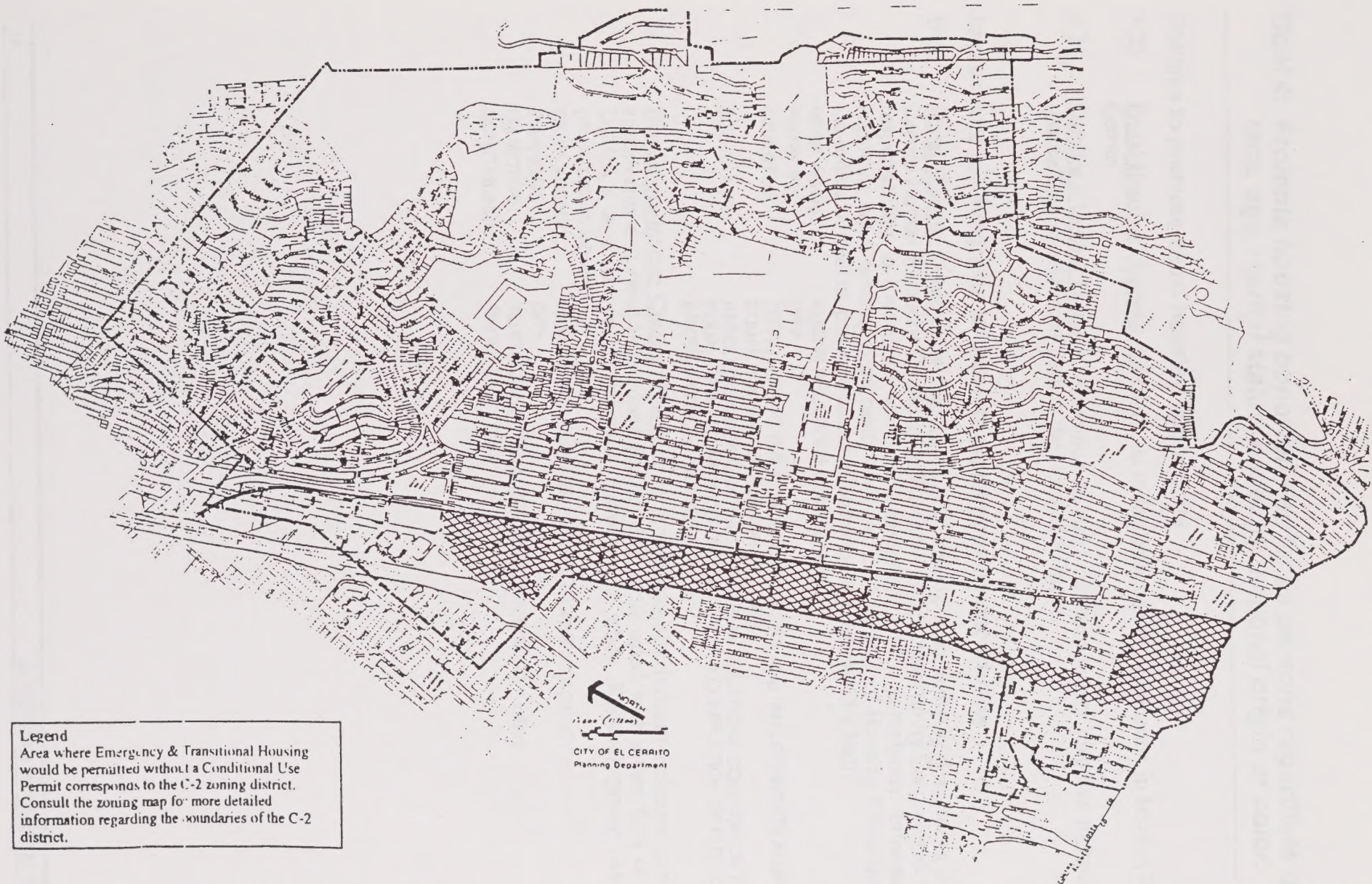
RESP. AGENCY: CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER
FINANCING: CITY
SCHEDULING: ONGOING AT ANNUAL BUDGET REVIEW.

IP.22 Limited Equity Cooperatives: Seek sponsors to utilize State funds to develop a limited equity cooperative [LEC]. Specific City actions to achieve this objective include: assessing the viability and process of establishing an LEC; make such information available at the Planning Division; seek cooperation and support for this program with the Contra Costa Housing Authority and non-profit housing organizations in the Bay area such as Bridge and Eden Housing; and locate potential sites for a LEC.

RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND CCHA
FINANCING: CITY
OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS.
SCHEDULING: START STUDY OF LEC'S, CONTACTS WITH CCHA AND NON-PROFIT HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS, BY SEPTEMBER, 1993.

- IP.23 Tax-Exempt Financing: Continue to require developers utilizing tax-exempt financing to include language in agreements with the City and/or the Redevelopment Agency permitting persons and households eligible for HUD Section 8 rental assistance or Housing Voucher Folders to apply for below-market-rate units provided in the development.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
- FINANCING: CITY AND HOUSING DEVELOPERS UTILIZING TAX-EXEMPT REVENUE BONDS.
- OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS.
- SCHEDULING: ONGOING
- IP.24 Seek Available Funding: Seek all available State and Federal assistance to develop affordable housing both for seniors, large families and households with children. Although Federal assistance for new construction is unavailable at the present time, the City will take advantage of any funds which may become available in the future.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
- FINANCING: CFHA RENTAL CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, AND OTHER STATE AND FEDERAL SOURCES.
- OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE UNITS.
- SCHEDULING: APPLICATION FOR FUNDING WITH APPROPRIATE SOURCE[S] COMPLETED BY APRIL, 1992.
- IP.25 Conversion of Section 8 Units: Approve an Ordinance requiring a one year notice to residents, the City and the Contra Costa Housing Authority of all conversions of Below Market Rate housing units to market rents.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
- FINANCING: CITY
- OBJECTIVE: TO INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CITY AND/OR NON-PROFIT HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS TO CONSERVE THESE BMR UNITS .
- SCHEDULING: AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992,
- IP 26 Emergency and Transitional Housing: Revise the Zoning Ordinance to designate an emergency and transitional housing facility a permitted use in the C-2 District as indicated in the attached Map 1.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
- FINANCING: CITY
- OBJECTIVE: TO PERMIT A 30-40 BED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IN FACILITY IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVT. § 65583[A][6] IN THE C-2 ZONING DISTRICT
- SCHEDULING: AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE, JULY 1992.

- IP 27 Standards for Emergency and Transitional Housing: Include in the Zoning Ordinance the following revisions pertaining to emergency and transitional housing:
- a) Use the Uniform Housing Code [UHC] Space and Occupancy Standards applying to shelters pursuant to Health and Safety Code § 50807;
 - b) Facilities shall not be placed on permanent foundations [eg use trailers] since this use is not intended to be permanent;
 - c) The site shall be adequately screened and fenced to provide an attractive appearance on all sides; and
 - d) Design Review approval shall be required prior to issuance of building permit.
 - e) Permit emergency and transitional housing facilities -as defined by a public agency- in existing structures and buildings, where otherwise permitted by building and health codes.
- RESP. AGENCY: CITY COUNCIL.
 FINANCING: CITY
 OBJECTIVE: TO PREVENT INCIDENCE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG EL CERRITO RESIDENTS.
 SCHEDULING: AMEND ZONING ORDINANCE, APRIL 1992.
- IP.28 Rental Deposit Guarantee and Revolving Loan Fund Programs: Consider funding the Rental Deposit Guarantee and Revolving Loan Fund Programs operated by Shelter, Inc. to specifically assist El Cerrito residents and to prevent and reduce homelessness.
- RESP. AGENCY: CITY COUNCIL.
 FINANCING: CITY
 OBJECTIVE: TO PREVENT INCIDENCE OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG EL CERRITO RESIDENTS.
 SCHEDULING: FUNDING BY JULY 1992.
- IP.29 Maintain Ongoing Estimates of the Demand for Emergency Housing: Consult with the El Cerrito Police Department and the County's Task Force on Homelessness to maintain ongoing estimates of the demand for emergency housing.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
 FINANCING: CITY
 SCHEDULING: ONGOING
- IP.30 Prepare the Appropriate Housing Impact and Mitigations for employment-generating commercial, office and industrial developments in the Environmental Review process.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION
 FINANCING: CITY
 OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE CONSIDERATION OF HOUSING NEEDS GENERATED BY NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PREPARATION OF CEQA RELATED DOCUMENTS.
 SCHEDULING: ONGOING.



Legend
 Area where Emergency & Transitional Housing would be permitted without a Conditional Use Permit corresponds to the C-2 zoning district. Consult the zoning map for more detailed information regarding the boundaries of the C-2 district.

NORTH
 1" = 1,000'
 CITY OF EL CERRITO
 Planning Department

Goal 4: Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin or color.

Policies to promote equal housing opportunity

- P.23 Equal Housing Opportunity: Continue to facilitate non-discrimination in housing in El Cerrito.
- P.24 Landlord-Tenant Disputes: Continue to refer landlord-tenant disputes to housing counselling organizations such as the Housing Alliance.

Implementation Programs to promote equal housing opportunity

- IP.31 Equal Housing Opportunity: Facilitate equal housing opportunity by designating the El Cerrito Human Relations Commission the City's Equal Opportunity Co-ordinator with responsibility to investigate and deal appropriately with complaints. Information regarding equal housing opportunity laws and the City's Equal Housing Opportunities Co-ordinator shall be prepared and distributed to the public at City Hall.
- RESP. AGENCY: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
- FINANCING: CITY
- OBJECTIVE: TO FACILITATE THE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY LAWS.
- SCHEDULING: RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CO-ORDINATOR AND COMPLETION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, APRIL 1992.
- IP.32 Nondiscrimination Clauses: Continue to provide nondiscrimination clauses in rental agreements and deed restrictions for housing constructed with either City or with DD&A's and Owner Participant Agreements when Redevelopment Agency participation occurs.
- RESP. AGENCY: PLANNING DIVISION AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
- FINANCING: CITY
- OBJECTIVE: TO ENFORCE EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY LAWS.
- SCHEDULING: ONGOING

Goal 5: Adopt and Implement a Housing Element that is in compliance with State Law and the requirements of the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Policies to implement the Housing Element

- P.25 City Leadership: Provide active leadership in implementing the policies and programs contained in the Housing Element in a timely manner.
- P.26 Public Participation: Encourage and support public participation in the formulation and review of the City's housing and development policies.
- P.27 Redevelopment Agency: The Redevelopment Agency shall promote the implementation of the policies and goals of the Housing Element, through its unique powers.
- P.28 Annual Review of Housing Element Implementation: Planning Commission and City Council shall review annually progress in implementing the Housing Element.

Implementation Programs to implement the Housing Element

- IP.33 Prepare an Annual Report to the City Council and Planning Commission which describes the amount and type of housing activity tied to an updated summary of the City's housing needs.
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| RESP. AGENCY: | PLANNING DIVISION |
| FINANCING: | CITY |
| OBJECTIVE: | TO FACILITATE AN ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CITY'S ABILITY TO ACHIEVE ITS HOUSING GOALS. |
| SCHEDULING: | WITH THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CIP BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION. |
- IP.34 Update Demographic Information when the results of the 1990 Census becomes available.
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| RESP. AGENCY: | PLANNING DIVISION |
| FINANCING: | CITY |
| OBJECTIVE: | INCLUDE UPDATED DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN THE HOUSING ELEMENT. |
| SCHEDULING: | COMPLETE BY DECEMBER 1992. |

Previous Housing Element

El Cerrito's Housing Element was last revised December 1987. It is difficult to analyse in quantitative terms the differences between what was projected or planned in the 1987 Housing Element and what was achieved, since this element did not contain quantified objectives. It is, however, possible to describe in a qualitative manner some successes and shortcomings of this element.

The Housing Element in effect during the period up to 1987 recognized that two essential aspects of El Cerrito's housing situation needed to change. First, the predominantly single-family suburban character of the City's housing stock should include a greater proportion of multifamily units such as townhouses, condominiums and apartments. Second, more affordable units should be provided to accommodate larger families and the growing number of senior citizens.

To a considerable extent, the City has been successful in achieving the goals established by the previous Housing Element. During the period 1980-1989, a total of 445 [69%] of the 641 units built in the City were multifamily units: townhouses, condominiums and apartments. In addition, the City has been able to obtain 280 affordable, below market rate units during this period; which comprised 2.7% of the housing stock in 1989. The majority of these units were designed for senior citizens and used Federal Section 8, Section 202, and Section 221[d][4] funds and Tax-Exempt Bond financing. In particular, the City is fortunate to have facilitated the development of El Cerrito Royale, comprising 30 very low income and 20 low income units. Refer to Appendix B which evaluates in detail the programs of the previous Housing Element.

The previous Housing Element objectives of conserving and rehabilitating homes in El Cerrito, have not been completely achieved, despite an innovative Certificate of Occupancy program requiring a biannual survey of rental units for code compliance. Over 55% of the City's housing stock is over 40 years old. A significant number of residents have low to moderate incomes and could qualify for home rehabilitation loan programs. While it is the primary responsibility of owners and residents to maintain and upgrade their units, the City's role in providing incentives to facilitate this process is crucial. Under the previous Housing Element, there has not been sufficient conservation and rehabilitation of older, non-rental housing units in the City, largely due to a lack of public response to specific City programs to facilitate renovation and rehabilitation of older homes such as the smoke detector rebate program, the emergency loan program and the paint grant program. Consequently, these programs were discontinued two years ago. The below market rate loan program for rehabilitation of dwellings for qualifying low to moderate income households, however, has continued to operate on a limited basis. Less than thirty below market rate rehabilitation loans were issued between 1987 and 1989. In addition, construction of 3+ bedroom units for large families has decreased in the past five years and has not kept pace with the number of these units anticipated by the 1987 Housing Element.

In general, the goals and policies contained in the previous Housing Element were clearly appropriate to meet the housing needs of the City. The revised Element builds on this foundation, while taking into account the constraint that the City is built-out and only few, yet significant, opportunities remain to increase housing opportunities.

The revised Element contains more specific implementation programs and quantified objectives. Priorities of the revised Housing Element are policies to conserve and rehabilitate existing homes and additional programs to advertise, implement and fund these activities. In addition, the revised Element has recognized the need to provide stronger incentives for the construction of additional affordable housing.

Public Participation

Under the direction of the City's Planning Commission, three public meetings and two workshops on the draft Housing Element were held. Additional public hearings were held by the City Council. All public comments were considered prior to adoption of the final Housing Element. Comments on the Housing Element were solicited from the Contra Costa Housing Authority and the Housing Alliance, a non-profit organization.

The two workshops conducted by the Planning Commission took testimony from many residents concerned with the location of the Housing Opportunity Sites on portions of parkland and on sites owned by the school district. The concern was expressed that these public amenities not be used for housing. There was, however, strong public support for increasing the number of housing units in commercial areas near the BART stations through the development of mixed use projects, incorporating multifamily housing with retail, office and other commercial uses.

The Planning Commission and City Council responded to these concerns expressed by the public. Both the Commission and the Council concurred that mixed use developments at locations close to shopping and public transit would be the best way to meet the City's housing needs, while at the same time facilitating a more pedestrian-oriented downtown and improving the vitality of retail and commercial activity.

Relationship of the Housing Element to the General Plan

The Housing Element is one of seven required general plan elements and is an integral part of the El Cerrito General Plan. Since the majority of El Cerrito's land use is in housing, the Housing Element is a key component of the City's future plans.

State law provides direction on how cities can maintain the General Plan as a policy guide by requiring the Planning Division to report annually to the City Council on "the status of the plan and progress in its implementation" (Government Code Section 65400 [b]). State law (Section 65588 [b]) further provides that "the housing element shall be revised as appropriate, but not less than every five years, to reflect the results of this periodic review". The analysis section of the Housing Element takes a fifteen year perspective, whereas the policies and programs are based on a five year time frame. In this fashion, a review of actual results of the previous housing goals, objectives, policies and programs can be developed by the City every five years.

Consistency of the Housing Element with the other elements of the City's General Plan is essential to having a complete and legally adequate General Plan. Several factors combine to limit the potential conflicts between the Housing and other elements of the General Plan: the City is nearly built-out; the additional housing identified in this element to meet regional housing needs require no changes to the land use inventory and will occur entirely within city limits; and the Housing Opportunity Sites require no changes to the General Plan Land Use map nor to the City's Zoning Ordinance. Nonetheless, the planning staff will review the General Plan within the next year to determine what, if any, amendments are required in the General Plan to ensure overall consistency.

Housing Background

The information presented in the Housing Background section is intended to summarize the following: demographic characteristics; employment trends; inventory of vacant residential land; and the constraints that exist to the construction of housing in El Cerrito. The policies and implementation programs address housing needs identified by this section.

Information in the Housing Background is based on the following sources: the ABAG Projections 90 report; data provided by the National Planning Data Corporation; California Department of Finance; Contra Costa County and from the City's Planning and Building Divisions.

Listed below are several principal findings of the Housing Background section:

- El Cerrito's population has remained relatively stable since the 1960's, experiencing a slight decline between 1970 and 1980.
- Population growth is projected by ABAG to decrease by 0.54% per year between 1990, and 2000. Although ABAG's figures overestimate the City's present and future population, the projections of a stable and slightly declining population is consistent with a city that is virtually built-out.
- Declining population size is due to smaller average household size and an ageing population.
- A larger proportion of El Cerrito's population comprise minorities [43.1%] than the average for the State [33%]. The largest minority group consists of persons of Asian origin.
- There has been a striking increase in the proportion of El Cerrito households earning \$50,000. per year and over, from 8.8% in 1980 to 34.7% in 1990, as more upper income residents move into the City.
- Over one third of El Cerrito households are in the Low or Very Low Income category, earning equal or less than 50% of the median household income for Contra Costa County. This portion of the community may experience difficulty in affording adequate housing.
- There will be a significant increase in the number of senior citizens living in El Cerrito and the surrounding urban areas. Consequently there will be a continuing need to provide more senior housing.
- Special housing needs include the handicapped, large families and female-headed households. There is not sufficient housing in El Cerrito to meet the specific needs of these groups.
- The total number of new jobs in El Cerrito is projected to increase as additional office and retail developments develop along the San Pablo Avenue corridor. This will have a beneficial impact on the City's jobs/housing ratio.
- ABAG housing needs determinations for El Cerrito are for 722 additional units by 1995, consisting of 318 units affordable to above-moderate income households, 144 units affordable to moderate income households, 108 units affordable to low income households and 152 units affordable to very low income households.

- Although El Cerrito continues to be a predominantly single family residential community, there has been a significant increase in the number of multifamily housing units built since 1980. Since 1980, 427 multifamily units and 236 single family units have been constructed in the City.
- Most of the City's remaining developable residential land is located in the redevelopment areas along the San Pablo corridor. Out of the 1,183 potential residential units that could be built in the City, 1,018 are located in redevelopment areas.

Summary of Demographic Trends;

El Cerrito was incorporated in 1917. The City's population increased steadily until the 1960's, with the greatest increase occurring between 1940 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1980 the population declined slightly as the City reached build-out and the number of persons per household decreased. Table 1 indicates that the City's population increased by 2% between 1980 and 1989, resulting in a relatively stable population during the last nine years.

FIGURE 1: POPULATION GROWTH 1920 TO 1989 IN EL CERRITO

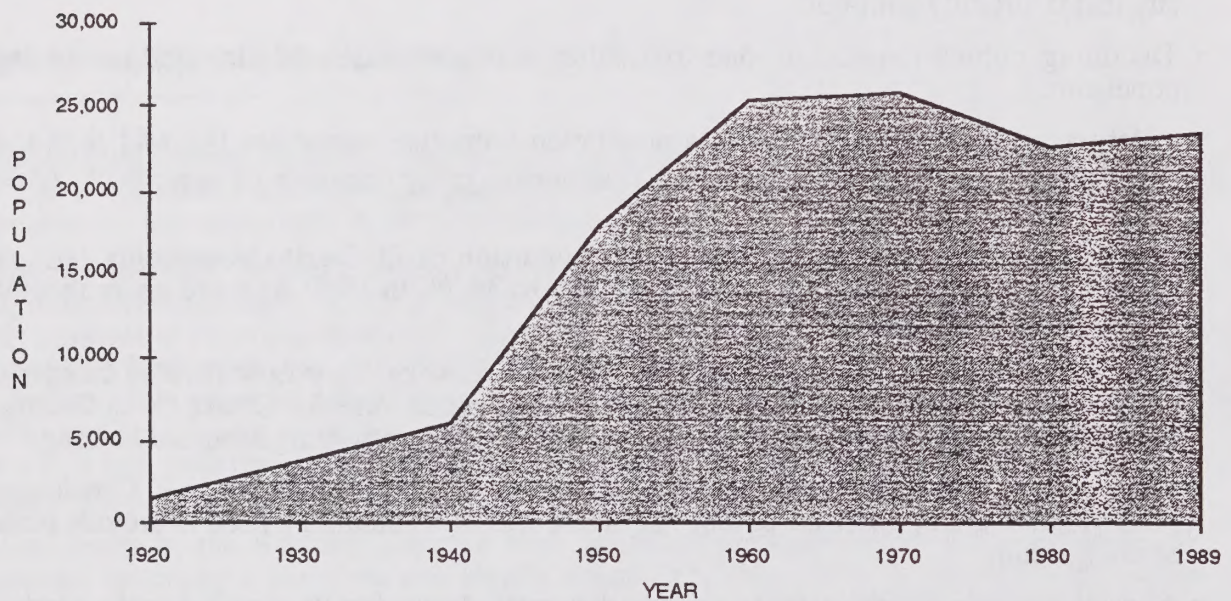


TABLE 1: POPULATION GROWTH 1920-1989

Year	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1989
Population	1,505	3,870	6,137	18,011	25,437	25,190	22,731	23,374

SOURCE: EL CERRITO HOUSING ELEMENT [1987] AND STATE DEPT. OF FINANCE

Population Projections

The projections in Table 2 were prepared using two different assumptions regarding the future growth rate of the El Cerrito's population. The City's figures start with the 1990 Census figure of 23,284 persons, whereas the ABAG projections overestimate the city's present and future population by starting at a figure of 29,000 persons. In addition, the City's projections assume an annual growth rate of 1.3% between 1990 and 1995 to take into account the regional housing needs allocations, whereas the ABAG projections assume a decreasing population during this period of time. Both the City's and ABAG's population projections, however, assume similar declining growth rate of 0.54% per year between 1995 and 2000, and a stable population from the year 2000 to 2005.

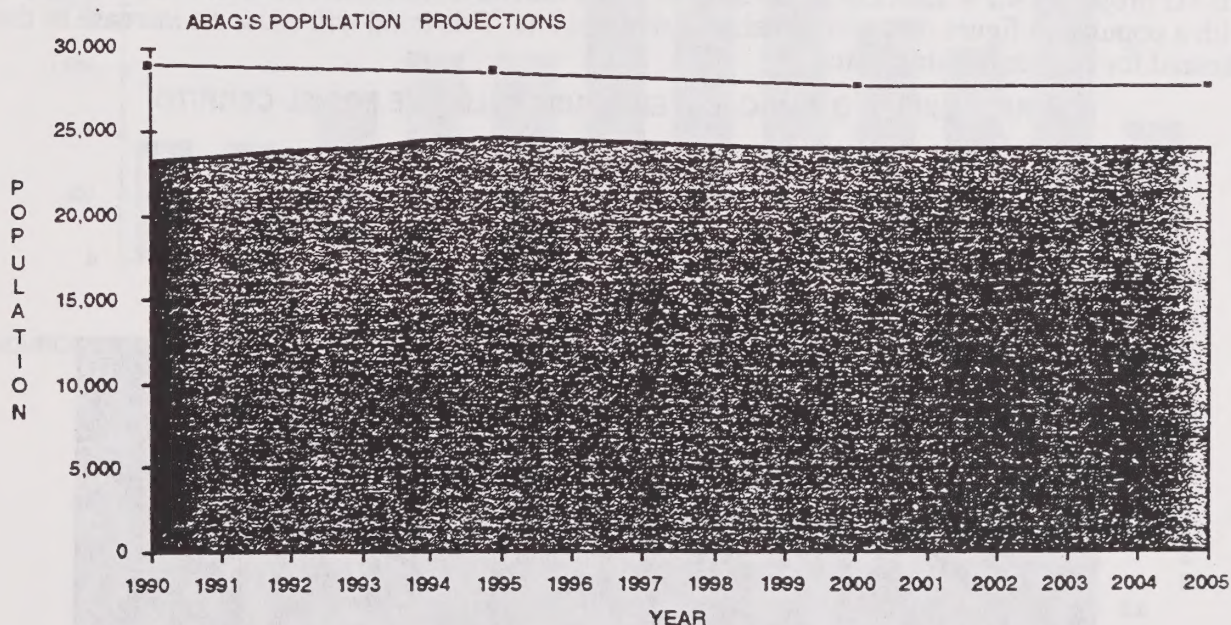
TABLE 2: COMPARATIVE POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1990 TO 2005

	1990	1995	2000	2005
City's Projections	23,284	24,839	24,173	24,173
ABAG's Projections*	29,000	28,600	27,800	27,800

SOURCE: ABAG PROJECTIONS 1990

The population projections are described by Figure 2. The City's population is anticipated to remain stable as it reaches complete build-out. The slight decline after 1995 occurs due to the aging of the population and a decline in household size.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR EL CERRITO: 1990 TO 2005



SOURCE: PLANNING DIVISION, CITY OF EL CERRITO

Significant population growth, however, is expected to continue for both the region and for Contra Costa County. Over the forecast period 1990-2005, ABAG projections indicate that the population of the nine-county Bay Area may increase by almost one million people. Contra Costa County's population is projected to increase by 34% over this period to 946,900 persons, making it the third fastest growing county in the Bay Area. Although El Cerrito's population is not expected to increase in size, demand for housing within the City will continue to be strong as the growth in the County's population continues.

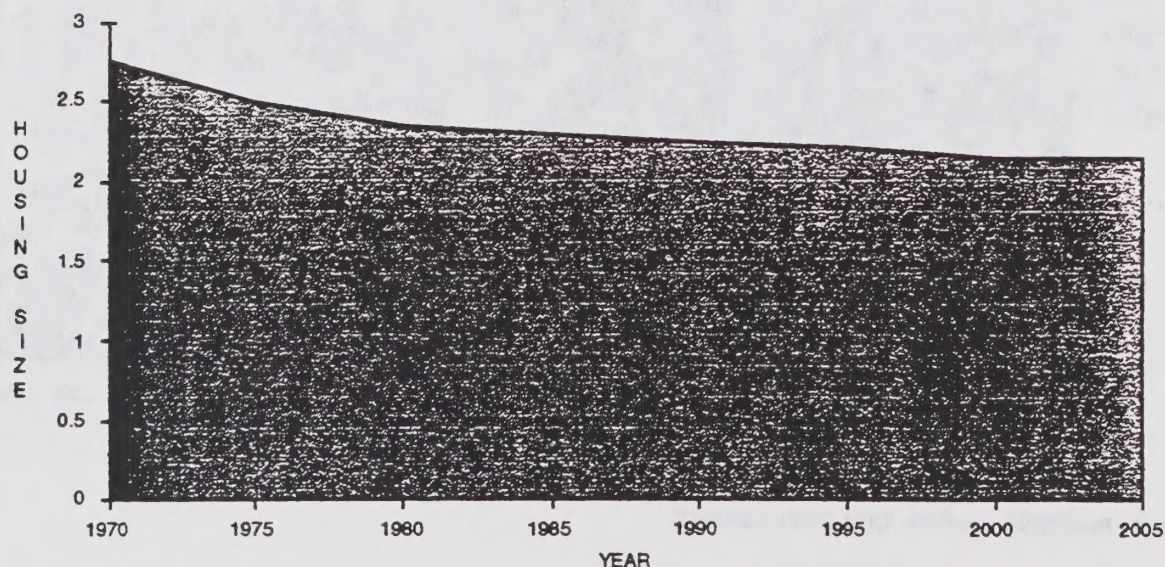
Household Size

Between 1970 and 1980 the average household size in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area decreased from 2.90 persons to 2.51 persons. In El Cerrito this figure decreased from 2.76 persons to 2.35 persons per household. Average household size in El Cerrito has been marginally smaller than for the region.

The major factors contributing to the decline in household size in the 1970's were the large number of 'baby boomers' that entered the labor force and set up their own households; the increasing number of divorces and female-headed households; and the low birth rates among women of child-bearing age. Statewide, the downward trend in household size has started to stabilize and, in some areas, to reverse itself. The Statewide average household size has increased from 2.68 persons in 1980 to 2.73 persons in 1987. In El Cerrito and Contra Costa County, however, household size has declined steadily during this period. This trend is expected to continue.

While the average household size has decreased, the total number of households has increased. ABAG projects a 4.2% increase in the number of El Cerrito households between 1985 and 2005, with a population figure that will remain relatively stable. This trend will cause an increase in the demand for smaller housing units.

FIGURE 3: EXISTING & PROJECTED HOUSEHOLD SIZE FOR EL CERRITO



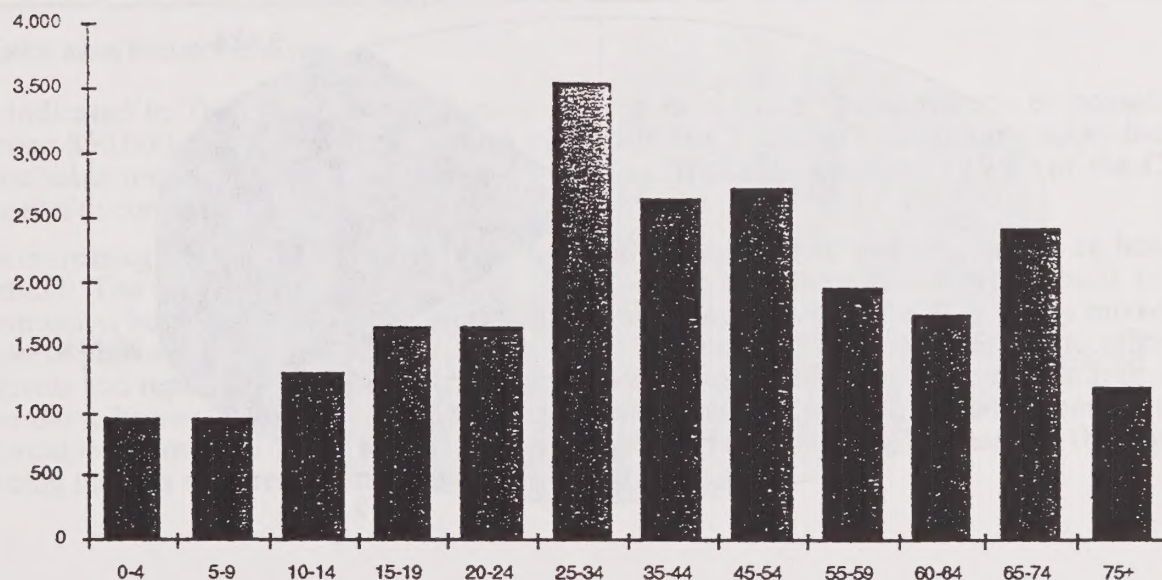
SOURCE: ABAG PROJECTIONS 1990

Age Structure

Significant changes are occurring in the age structure of El Cerrito's population reflecting state and national trends. The City's proportion of elderly residents (over 55 years old) has increased, from 23% of the population in 1970 to 27% of the population in 1980. This increase in El Cerrito's senior population is accompanied by a commensurate decrease in the proportion of children. Children under 15 years old constituted 21% of the population in 1970 and only 14% of the population in 1980. The decrease in those under 15 years is partially attributable to lower birth rates and aging of the population.

The State Dept. of Finance (DOF) projections for Contra Costa County indicate that the elderly population is expected to grow by 50% between 1985 and the year 2000, while the proportion of the population under the age of 15 years will continue to fall. El Cerrito will likely follow the State Dept. of Finance projections for Contra Costa County. These trends will have a significant impact on the provision of health and social services, as well as on the demand for specialized housing for the growing senior population.

FIGURE 4: AGE STRUCTURE IN EL CERRITO



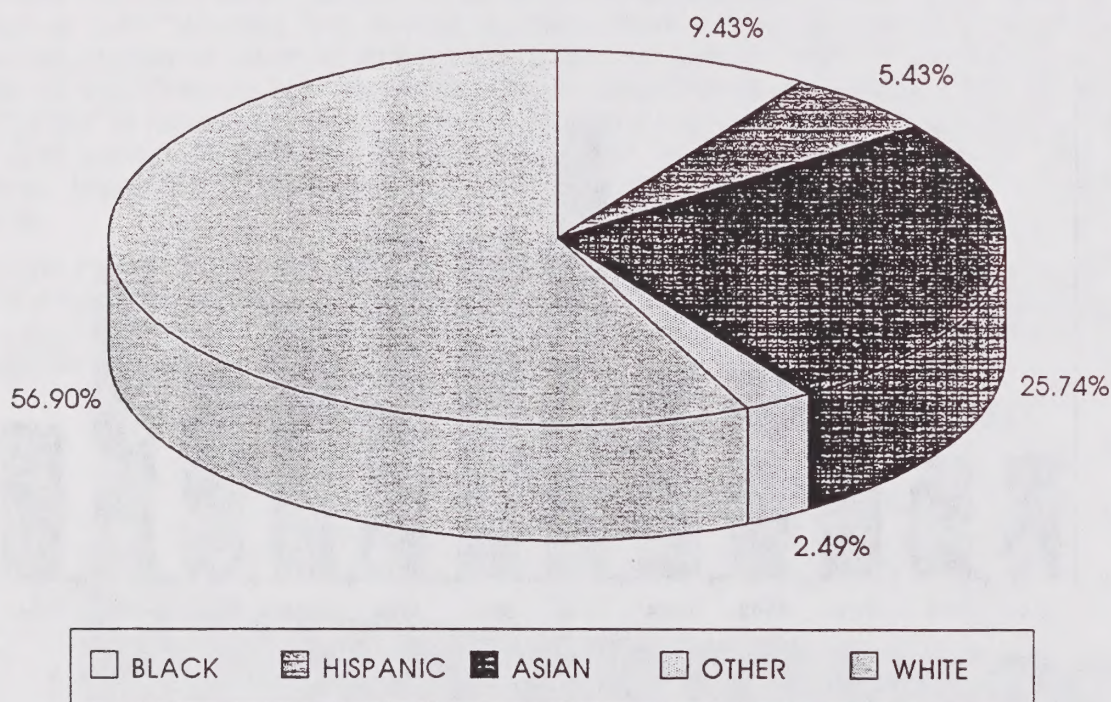
SOURCE: US CENSUS 1980

Minority Population

The minority population of El Cerrito represents a significant and growing proportion of the total population. The minority population has grown from 31.6% in 1980 to 43.1% of the total population in 1990, with the largest increase coming from persons of Asian origin¹.

It is likely that the minority population of El Cerrito will continue to have an increasing number of people of Hispanic and Asian origin, as immigration from Latin America and Asia to the San Francisco region continues. It should be noted that El Cerrito's minority population is significantly higher than that of the State, which has a 33% minority population in 1990. Figure 5 shows the composition of El Cerrito's minority population.

FIGURE 5: MINORITY POPULATION 1990



SOURCE: NATIONAL PLANNING DATA CORP. "OTHER" INCLUDES AMERICAN INDIAN, FILIPINO, ALEUT AND PACIFIC ISLANDER.

¹ National Planning Data Corp. 1990 estimates

Household Income

ABAG's 1990 estimated Mean Household Income for El Cerrito was \$49,100.00 compared with \$49,600.00 for Contra Costa County. The estimated percentage increase in mean household income between 1985 and 1990 was 4% for El Cerrito and 6% for the County. Both the existing and projected income data indicate the differences in income levels between El Cerrito and the County will continue, with incomes in the County remaining slightly higher.

TABLE 3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVELS 1979 AND 1990 IN EL CERRITO

Household Income	Number of Households 1979	Percentage 1979	Number of Households 1990	Percentage 1990	Percentage Change
Under \$15,000	3,101	32.1	1,657	16.1	-16.0
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,468	25.5	1,420	13.8	-11.7
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1,875	19.4	1,505	14.7	-4.7
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,376	14.2	2,125	20.7	+6.5
\$50,000 - \$74,999	628	6.5	2,130	20.7	+14.2
\$75,000 or more	220	2.3	1,429	14.0	+11.7
Total	9,668	100	10,266	100	

SOURCE: ABAG PROJECTIONS 1990

As indicated in Table 3, there has been a striking increase in the proportion of households earning \$50,000 per year and over, from 8.8% in 1980 to 34.7% in 1990, as more upper-income households move into the City. Nonetheless, a significant proportion (29.9%) of the City's households continues to have an annual income of less than \$25,000.

The increasing average household income observed in the City has important effects on housing demand. The higher income households will be able to afford new housing built in the community, both the single family units built on infill lots as well as the multifamily mixed use projects planned adjacent to BART stations. These households will also be able to afford to renovate and repair many of the City's existing older single family homes. It will continue to be necessary, however, to maintain incentives for the construction of additional housing units affordable to low and moderate income households, given the rapid increase in the cost of housing that has occurred recently throughout the Bay Area.

Senior Household Income Levels

Additional information is provided in Table 4 for El Cerrito's senior population because it is the fastest growing sector of El Cerrito's population. It is anticipated that the senior population will increase by more than 50% between 1985 and 2000. In order to identify housing needs of this group, it is necessary to know their income levels.

The median household income for seniors (individuals 55 years and older) is estimated at \$38,736 in 1990². There exists, however, a significant proportion of seniors with relatively low incomes. As indicated in Table 4, 40% of the City's seniors had an annual income of less than \$25,000.00. For many seniors with incomes below this figure, the cost of housing may be a problem, whether it is paying for the taxes and maintenance on an older home or monthly rents which in 1990 averaged \$680 for a studio/one bedroom apartment in El Cerrito³.

TABLE 4: SENIOR HOUSEHOLD INCOME 1990 IN EL CERRITO

Household Income	Total Households	Percentage
Under \$15,000	973	23
\$15,000 - \$24,999	702	17
\$25,000 - \$34,999	533	13
\$35,000 - \$49,999	747	18
\$50,000 - \$74,999	742	17
\$75,000 or more	526	12
Total	4,223	100

SOURCE: NATIONAL PLANNING DATA CORP. 1990

² National Planning Data Corp. 1990 estimates

³ According to a survey of rents in El Cerrito conducted by the City's housing consultant during July through September, 1990.

Employment Projections 1990 to 2005

The total number of new jobs in El Cerrito is projected by ABAG to increase by 1,030 or 21% between 1990 and the year 2005. The employment projection prepared by the City indicates an increase of 1,414 jobs during this period. Both the ABAG and City projections anticipate a similar level of job increase in El Cerrito.

The largest increase in projected new jobs in the City will be in the Service (18%), and Retail (16%) sectors. A much stronger increase in employment is projected by ABAG for Contra Costa County as a whole, which is anticipated to have a 67% increase in employment during the same period. Although there may be variations among projected growth in employment between El Cerrito and the County, the significance of these projections is that they indicate that an important structural change in the local economy is taking place. Future job creation is becoming increasingly based on the growth of the service and retail sectors, rather than on the growth of the manufacturing industry.

The projected increase in employment will affect the balance between jobs and housing. At present there are more employed residents in El Cerrito than there are jobs. This means that a significant proportion of employed residents commute to work outside the City. Increasing the number of jobs, particularly in the retail and service sectors, will result in an increased demand for affordable housing. If this type of housing is not provided in sufficient numbers, additional workers will commute to El Cerrito, worsening already poor traffic conditions during peak hours.

TABLE 5: EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS 1990 TO 2005

Job Type	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Agriculture & Mining	90	140	160	140	160
Manufacturing & Wholesaling	230	220	250	270	280
Retail	2,790	2,840	3,140	3,170	3,190
Services	1,490	1,560	1,770	1,830	1,840
Other	1,860	2,010	2,360	2,310	2,330
Total Jobs	6,460	6,770	7,680	7,720	7,800

SOURCE: ABAG PROJECTIONS 1990.

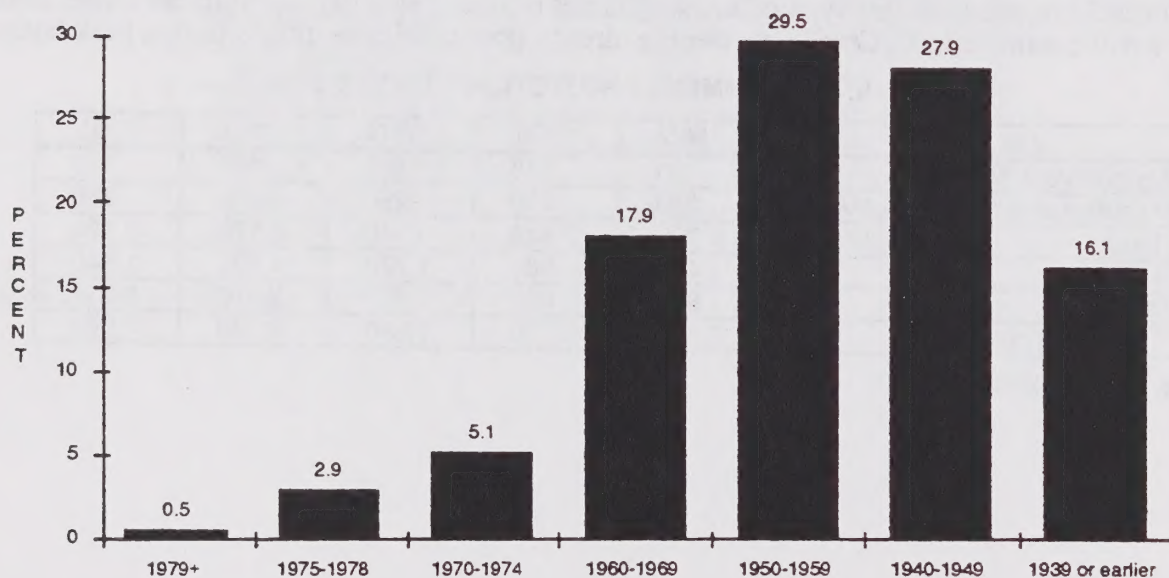
Housing Characteristics

The majority [73.5%] of homes in the City are older dwellings that were constructed prior to 1960, as shown in Figure 7.

The Building Division estimates that 30% of the City's housing units are in need of some rehabilitation such as repairs to windows or roofs and repair of termite-related damage. The majority of units that require rehabilitation were built prior to 1960. It is estimated by the Building Division that approximately 120 units throughout the City will require rehabilitation within the next five years and it is estimated that of this figure approximately 10 units may need to be replaced.

El Cerrito is a predominantly residential community. The existing housing stock defines the character of the City and its neighborhoods and is, therefore, the City's most precious resource. The relatively high number of older homes in the City underlines the need for policies and programs which continue to maintain and enhance the quality of older residential areas.

FIGURE 7: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK



SOURCE: 1980 US CENSUS AND EL CERRITO PLANNING DIVISION

Annual Construction of Housing Units by Type 1980 - 1989

Fluctuations in the type of housing built reflects not only the relative amount of land zoned for different types of residential development in the City, but also changes in various economic factors such as tax codes and the real estate and financial markets.

**TABLE 6: ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE
IN EL CERRITO 1980 TO 1989**

Year	Single Family	Percent	Multiple Family	Percent	Demolitions	Net Housing Unit Increase
1980	40	95.2	2	4.8	2	40
1981	23	74.1	8	25.8	1	30
1982	2	100	0	0	3	-1
1983	25	58.1	18	41.2	7	36
1984	31	86.1	5	13.9	2	34
1985	63	42.6	85	57.4	3	145
1986	9	60.0	6	40.0	1	14
1987	13	7.0	172	93.0	1	184
1988	17	14.5	107	91.5	1	123
1989	13	23.6	42	76.4	1	36
Total	236	47.1	445	52.9	22	641

SOURCE: EL CERRITO BUILDING DIVISION

Multiple family units constructed without the assistance of the Redevelopment Agency ranged from 0 to 18 units per year between 1980 and 1984, reached a high of 172 units in 1987. New multifamily developments that occurred in 1988 and 1989 were the result of action by the City's Redevelopment Agency. Future increases in multifamily housing will depend on the availability of vacant land, the continuing involvement of the Redevelopment Agency, extending the Mixed Use District, combined with favorable financial and market conditions. Future construction of single family homes will be limited by the small area of buildable land remaining in El Cerrito. In addition, there are many single family units located on R-3 zoned land, which permits multifamily housing, yet few conversions to higher density dwellings have taken place.

Various Housing Characteristics

Presented in the Tables 7, 8, and 9 are several characteristics of the housing stock in El Cerrito. As indicated in the tables below, El Cerrito remains predominantly a single family residential community, with a high rate of owner occupied dwellings.

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF BEDROOMS BY OCCUPANCY

Number of Bedrooms	Owner Occupied	Percent	Renter Occupied	Percent	Total	Percent
0	16	0.2	92	2.8	108	1.1
1	276	4.3	870	26.7	1,146	11.9
2	2,096	32.7	1,749	53.7	3,845	39.8
3	3,189	49.8	476	14.6	3,665	37.9
4	669	10.4	68	2.0	737	7.6
5+	159	2.5	0	0	159	1.6

SOURCE: U S CENSUS 1980

TABLE 8: TENURE

Tenure	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied	6,405	66.3
Renter Occupied	3,255	33.7
Total	9,660	100

SOURCE: US CENSUS 1980

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE 1989

-	Number	Percent
Single Family	7,655	74.3
Multiple Units	2,568	24.9
Mobile Homes	77	0.7
Total	10,300	100

SOURCE: US CENSUS AND EL CERRITO PLANNING DIVISION

The vacancy rate was 2.5% in 1988 for El Cerrito, according to the Federal Home Loan Bank in San Francisco. It is generally accepted that an overall vacancy rate of 4% is needed to provide for normal turnover in housing units. El Cerrito's vacancy rate shows a lack of rental units and a strong demand for rental housing exists. The majority, 66.3%, of the City's housing is owner-occupied, with a large number of homes having 4 or more rooms. In addition, the majority, 74.3%, of the City's housing stock is single family units.

Special Housing Needs

As indicated in the preceding section, Summary of Demographic Trends, the State Department of Finance projects doubling in the number of seniors in Contra Costa County between 1980 and the year 2000.

To date there has been a relatively large number of senior housing units built in El Cerrito in comparison with surrounding communities in Contra Costa County. The following tables list the total number and location of senior housing and group care facilities in the City.

TABLE 10: SENIOR CITIZENS HOUSING

Name	# of Units	Location	Financing
Hazel Shirley	68	Jefferson & San Pablo Aves	Federal Section 202 & Redevelopment Agency Funds
El Cerrito Royale	103	6510 Gladys	Tax exempt bonds & Redevelopment Agency Funds
Total	171		

TABLE 11: SENIOR GROUP CARE FACILITIES

Name	Location	# of Beds	Financing
Shield InterCare	230 Carlson Street	45 beds	Private

There are a total of 171 residential and 45 group care units for seniors. With a current population of 23,284, there is approximately one senior unit for every 108 residents, representing approximately 2% of the City's housing units.

Three principal factors will affect the future number of senior housing and care facilities that can be built:

- a) There are few remaining sites that are suitably zoned for senior housing. These are located in redevelopment areas currently zoned C2 and C3 which permits multifamily housing;
- b) There has been decreasing Federal and State funding to provide additional housing for seniors. In addition, the federal tax reform enacted in 1986 provides for the establishment of State caps for private activity bonds which will result in major reductions in the volume of tax-exempt bonds issued to finance single and multifamily housing in California; and
- c) There are vacant bedrooms in the City. It is difficult to accurately quantify the number of such under-utilized housing units in the City. The diminishing household size since the 1960's combined with the large number of existing single family homes indicates that there could be significant source of additional housing for seniors dispersed throughout existing neighborhoods. An acceptable housing program for seniors could be implemented to utilize this extra housing capacity.

Programs to assist seniors who wish to continue living in their own homes not only provide important psychological and social benefits, but reduce the need to build additional housing. Examples of such programs include low interest loans to qualifying seniors for maintenance and repair of their homes and matching seniors with spare capacity in their homes with other seniors looking for housing.

Handicapped Persons

The number of handicapped persons in a City has important planning and social implications and will affect the demand for specialized handicapped access and transportation facilities, certain social services, in addition to specialized housing. Handicapped persons comprised 957 persons, or 5.2% of the city's population in 1980.

The U.S. Census defines handicapped persons as those with impaired mobility and includes the blind.

In addition, 322 persons of working age, 16 to 64 years, and 430 persons over the age of 65 in El Cerrito could not use public transportation because of a physical disability in 1980.

Female Headed Households

The number of households headed by women has implications in terms of the demand for childcare and other social services. The number of female-headed households was 2045, representing 9% of El Cerrito households in 1980. There is an obvious need for more affordable housing for this sector of the community. The waiting list for Section 8 housing at the Contra Costa Housing Authority [CCHA] is over 2,000 persons, more than 40% of these represent female-headed households.

Farmworkers

There are no farmworkers in El Cerrito and the City is located in an urbanized area of Contra Costa County. Consequently, there are no policies that address this housing need.

Large Families

Approximately 3.6% of the City's population live in large families⁴, which comprise five or more persons per family. Although demographic trends indicate that family size will continue to decrease, thereby reducing the demand for housing units with more than four bedrooms, the density bonus program requires that a certain number of units designed for large families be constructed to maintain a diversity in the City's housing stock and to accommodate the existing demand for this type of housing.

Table 13 indicates the number of persons by family size in 1990, based on the projection of 1980 Census figures.

Special Housing Needs Summary

Table 13 summarizes the special housing needs for senior citizens, large families, handicapped persons, female-headed households, and the number of overcrowded housing units. The following figures were obtained by deriving the percentage that each category represented of the total population in the 1980 Census and applying this figure to the Department of Finance's 1990 population estimates for El Cerrito.

TABLE 13: SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS SUMMARY

Housing Need Category	1980 Census		1990 Estimated	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Senior Citizens [>55 yrs]	7,335	27%	6,310	27%
Large Families ⁵ [> 5 persons]	818	3.6%	841	3.6%
Handicapped Persons	1186	5.2%	1,215	5.2%
Female Headed				
Households	2045	9%	2103	9%
Overcrowded Units ⁶				
a) owner occupied	590	2.60%	607	2.6%
b) renter occupied	444	1.95%	455	1.9%
c) total	1,034	4.5%	1,063	4.5%

⁴ According to the US Census, 1980.

⁵ The 1980 Census presents data for the number of persons in family for the San Francisco/Oakland SMSA only. Consequently this data was proportionalized and applied to El Cerrito population figures. The State Department of Finance population estimate for January 1, 1989 is 23,374 persons.

⁶ 1980 U.S. Census Data for El Cerrito.

Distribution of Household Income

In analyzing the ability of different economic sectors of the community to pay for housing costs, four income categories are commonly used: above moderate; moderate; low; and very low. The following brief definitions explain each of these income categories expressed in dollar amounts as of February 16, 1990, for a typical three person household⁷:

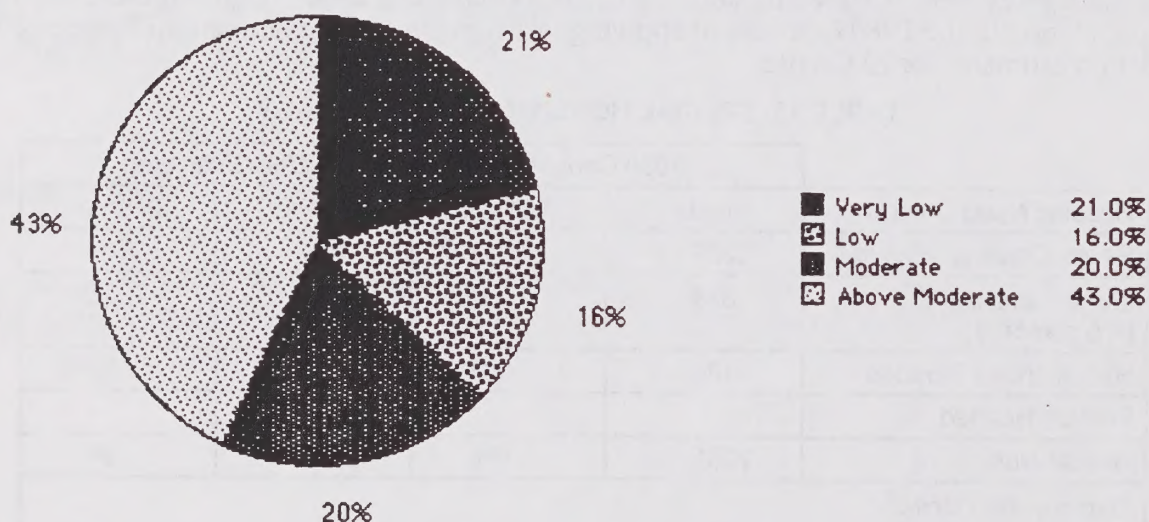
Above Moderate-Income: Household income which exceeds 120% of the median income for Contra Costa County. This represents an annual income of \$59,920 or more.

Moderate-Income: Household income between 80 and 120% of the median income for Contra Costa County. This represents an annual income of \$35,280 to \$59,919.

Low Income: Household income between 50 and 80% of the median income for Contra Costa County. This represents an annual income of \$22,050 to \$35,279

Very Low Income: Household income not exceeding 50% of the median income for Contra Costa County. This represents an annual income of up to \$22,049.

FIGURE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME CATEGORY IN EL CERRITO



SOURCE: FEDERAL HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD), MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME REPORT, FEBRUARY 1990

⁷ Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), February 16, 1990.

Table 14 presents the distribution of households by these four income categories in the City, the County and the nine-county Bay Area.

TABLE 14: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME CATEGORY

	Above moderate	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Total
# of Households	4160	1935	1548	2032	9676
Percent in El Cerrito	44	20	15	21	100
Percent in County	46	20	14	20	100
Percent in Region	40	21	16	23	100

SOURCE: ABAG: HOUSING NEEDS DETERMINATIONS, JANUARY, 1989

The distribution households by income in El Cerrito does not vary significantly from that observed for the County or the Bay Area. Approximately a third of the City's households have Low to Very Low incomes.

Affordable Housing Units

Affordable housing is defined as housing not costing more than 30% of the household income of very low to moderate income households. For rental units to be considered affordable, the rent plus utilities cannot exceed 30% of the median monthly income for the household as established by HUD. Residential units that provide ownership are considered affordable if ownership expenses including principal, interest, taxes and insurance do not exceed 30% of the median monthly household income for the different sized households as established by HUD. The HUD definitions of low to moderate-income are described on page 33.

The City has been able to obtain 280 affordable or below market rate units through the Federally subsidized Section 8 and Section 202 programs and through tax-exempt bond financing, representing 2.7% of the City's total housing stock in 1989. The location, size and type of these housing units are presented in Table 15.

TABLE 15: EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Name & Location	Date	Number of Units	Affordable Units	Type of Units
Hazel Shirley Jefferson and San Pablo Aves	1985	68	68	Senior housing: Section 202
Riley Bower 10944 San Pablo Avenue	1988	162	162	Moderate income housing
El Cerrito Royale 6510 Gladys	1989	103	50	Senior housing: 30 very low income & 20 units low income units [Section 202]
IBEX Project San Pablo Avenue	1991	136	54	Senior housing: 20% very-low and 20% low income units
Total		469	334	

The Redevelopment Agency has used all of its Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund (L & M Fund) to participate in the development of the IBEX project which provides 136 housing units for seniors, 20% affordable to very-low income and 20% affordable to low income senior households. The Agency assembled 10 parcels of land and wrote down the land value for the project which was relatively high due to the the number of existing buildings that had to be demolished. The total contribution of the Redevelopment Agency to this project was \$3.4 million dollars: \$2.6M in bonds and \$800K from the L & M Fund. The debt service for the &2.6 million bond issue is being supported by annual contributions of the tax-increment revenue to the L & M Fund.

The majority of these affordable units will probably be converted to market rate housing by the termination of the rental contract or deed restriction and will lose their subsidy status within fifteen to twenty years. When this occurs, many low-income households could be displaced without any replacement housing being planned or built⁸.

The conversion of these affordable units to market rate units is a potentially serious future housing problem that cannot be solved by local government. Statewide, these units are being lost faster than they are being built. Since 1981, the federal housing budget has been cut by two-thirds and the Governor's office has vetoed over \$100 million in new and continuing appropriations for low-income housing, despite the documented increasing shortage of decent affordable housing.

Although none of these affordable units will be converted to market rate within the next ten-year perspective of this Housing Element, the policies and programs section recognizes this upcoming housing need and recommends a Below Market Rate [BMR] housing program. In addition, it is recommended that the City enact an ordinance which provides at least one year advance notice of the intended conversion, thereby extending the State's requirement by another six months. This additional period of time may provide the opportunity for a non-profit housing development corporation to negotiate purchase of affected units.

Ability to Pay Housing Costs

According to the standards set by Federal HUD and the California State Dept. of Housing and Community Development, housing costs should not exceed twenty-five to thirty percent of a household's income. If households are paying more than this amount they are considered to be overpaying for housing. To analyze the extent to which El Cerrito households are overpaying for housing, housing costs as a percentage of household income were evaluated in Table 16.

TABLE 16: EL CERRITO HOUSEHOLDS PAYING MORE THAN 25% OF INCOME FOR HOUSING

	Number	%
Owner Occupied	1,041	10.7
Renter Occupied	1,467	15.2
Total	2,508	25.9

SOURCE: 1980 CENSUS COUNT OF 9,660 TOTAL UNITS

⁸ Inventory of Federally Subsidized Low Income Rental Units at Risk of Conversion -1990 Update, California Housing Partnership & California Coalition for Rural Housing Project, 1990.

Approximately a quarter of El Cerrito households are paying more than 25% of their income on housing. More renters are overpaying than owners. As indicated in Tables 17 and 18, the amount of overpayment for housing increases as household income decreases. Not surprisingly, the burden of meeting housing costs is most severe for lower income households.

TABLE 17: RENT AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN EL CERRITO

Rent as % of Income	Income Category				
	\$0-4,999	\$5,000-9,000	\$10,000-14,999	\$15,000-19,000	\$20,000 +
0-19%	-	7	97	222	852
20-24%	5	28	142	152	130
24-34%	5	130	244	141	87
35+%	283	410	134	33	-
Not computed	36	13	10	-	27
% overpayment by income	98.3%	93.9%	61.3%	31.8%	8.1%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, 1980

TABLE 18: MORTGAGE AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Owner Costs as % of Income	Income Category				
	\$0-4,999	\$5,000-9,000	\$10,000-14,999	\$15,000-19,000	\$20,000 +
0-19%	38	278	360	489	3,049
20-24%	56	49	44	71	316
24-34%	84	82	39	56	203
35+%	175	95	67	103	137
Not computed	29	-	-	-	-
% overpayment by income	73.4%	35.1%	20.8%	22.1%	9.2%

SOURCE: US CENSUS, 1980

A survey of rents in El Cerrito carried out in July 1990 by the consultant who prepared the Housing Element, indicated an average rent of \$680 a month for a studio and one bedroom unit and \$750 a month for a two bedroom apartment, which represents a significant increase over the rent levels identified by the 1980 census. Throughout the Bay area, rental costs rose by 18.6% between 1985 and 1988, which is almost twice the rate of inflation and substantially larger than the growth in household income observed for this period.

To afford an average-priced one bedroom apartment in El Cerrito which rents for \$680 a month, a household must have an annual gross income between \$32,640 and \$27,200, depending on whether 30% or 25% of the gross income is allocated for housing. This level of rent is affordable for above-moderate and moderate-income, but not for the low and very low-income households comprising 15% and 21% respectively, of the households in the City in 1989⁹. The decreasing supply of affordable rental units is a county-wide phenomena. Until additional construction of rental units occurs, the combination of strong demand and low vacancies will contribute to an increasingly severe shortage of rental units and a decrease in their affordability.

The situation for home ownership is similar. A median priced 2 bedroom home in El Cerrito cost \$192,000 in May 1990¹⁰. In order to qualify for a mortgage to purchase this home a household would require a gross annual income of \$78,560¹¹. This assumes a 20% cash down payment of \$32,400. and a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at an interest rate of 12.5%, including taxes and insurance. The 1990 estimated mean household income for El Cerrito is \$43,512¹². less than the minimum income required to purchase an average priced home within the City. Although many El Cerrito residents have purchased their homes many years ago, before the time when affordability became an issue, is evident that the majority of these people could now no longer qualify to purchase a home in their community.

Overpayment is clearly an acute problem for renters as well as for those seeking to purchase homes. The policies and programs section of the Element contain a number of actions to address this situation.

9 National Planning Data Corp., 1990.

10 West Contra Costa County Board of Realtors and Multiple Listing Service, May, 1990.

11 With a 20% down, a 30 year 12.5% mortgage on \$153,600 plus 2 points would cost \$19,968 @ year in payments [\$1664 @ month]. Assuming another \$300 @ month for utilities and insurance the annual cost would be \$23,568. Thirty percent of an annual income of \$78,650 equals the total monthly carrying cost of this house.

12 National Planning Data Corp.

ABAG Housing Need Determinations

State legislation enacted in 1980, AB 2853, mandated that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) determine the existing and projected regional housing needs and also determine each city's share of the regional need for housing by housing type and cost. The local share for regional housing assigned to each city by ABAG must be considered in the Housing Element. ABAG's determinations of the local share of the regional housing need takes into consideration the following factors: employment opportunities; availability of suitable sites and public facilities; market demand for housing; commuting patterns; and the type and tenure of housing.

ABAG's Housing Needs Determinations report of January 1989 indicated that El Cerrito's total housing need was for 722 housing units for the period 1988-1995. The distribution of this housing need figure by income category for El Cerrito is presented in Table 19¹³.

TABLE 19: ABAG HOUSING NEEDS DETERMINATIONS 1988-95

Income Group & Relation to County Median Income	Required Percentage	Total Housing Unit Need
Very Low [0-50%]	21%	152
Low Income [50-80%]	15%	108
Moderate [80-120%]	20%	144
Above Moderate [>120%]	44%	318
Total		722

ABAG breaks down the total 1988-1995 housing needs according to four income categories: very low; low; moderate; and above moderate. The percentage of households within income categories was determined by ABAG based on an averaging of the city's percentage distribution with the county's and the region's percentage distributions. The definitions of these income categories are presented on page 33.

The total needs figure of 722 units established by ABAG must be adjusted to reflect the 159 units that were completed during 1988 and 1989. Consequently, the total housing need for El Cerrito, as of December 31/89, is 563 units.

¹³ A more detailed explanation of how the regional housing needs figures are derived for each jurisdiction is contained in the ABAG report entitled Regional Housing Needs Determinations, 1989.

Emergency and Transitional Housing

The City has recognized the urgency of providing assistance to the homeless and has complied with recent revisions to state housing law, as amended by AB 1996, which required that an identification of the need for emergency or transitional housing, as well as potential sites for this type of housing based on the assessment of need be included in the Housing Element.

Accurate information on the number of homeless persons is impossible to obtain. No 'official counts' of the homeless exist. Only a small proportion of the homeless population contact government and private agencies which provide assistance. Estimates of the number of homeless vary greatly because this population is transient, often moving from place to place every night seeking shelter.

The most recent data is provided by the Report on Homelessness prepared July 1987 by Contra Costa County's Task Force on Homelessness. This report estimates that there are between 6,000 to 10,000 homeless people in Contra Costa County. The City estimates that there are approximately 10 to 15 homeless persons in El Cerrito, with the larger figure occurring during the winter months. The administrator of the nearest shelter, the Richmond Rescue Mission, was unable to provide information on the number of their clients that resided, or formerly resided, in El Cerrito.

The majority of homeless are County residents. In most cases, the increase in homelessness has occurred because local people are unable to afford housing, rather than being the result of an influx of homeless from other areas. In addition, the report indicated that of the homeless persons surveyed:

- 70% were families with children;
- 18% were single men;
- 8% were single women;
- 3% were childless couples, and
- a significant proportion of homeless persons consisted of veterans and the elderly.

The need for emergency shelter far exceeds the supply. The report indicated that 77% of the homeless persons were not housed after contacting one or more providers. Furthermore 82% of the unhoused homeless during the survey period were families with children.

The County has established a non-profit organization, Shelter Inc. to receive funds, to implement programs for the homeless and to refer homeless persons to available resources. At present there is one shelter providing services near El Cerrito - the Richmond Rescue Mission, with 288 beds. There are between 20 and 35 SRO's [single room occupancy] facilities in the City at motels located on San Pablo Avenue.

The magnitude of this problem far exceeds the resources of local government, particularly smaller cities. The City, however, has complied with recent revision to Govt. Code § 65583 [a] [6] and [c] [1] regarding the identification of adequate sites to facilitate the development of emergency shelters and transitional housing with programs which identify an area suitable for this use. Program IP-26 requires a Zoning Ordinance Amendment allowing Transitional and Emergency Housing to be a permitted use in the C-2 Zoning District provided the Design Review Board finds that following performance criteria have been met: a] these housing facilities shall consist of temporary rather than permanent structures, using mobile homes and similar structures not placed on permanent foundations; b] adequate perimeter fencing shall be provided on all sides of the project; and c] a well-lighted, attractive and secure access is provided to the street.

The C-2 Zoning District is an appropriate location for such a facility since:

- there are several underutilized sites within this district;
- this area is centrally located and near public transit;
- all infrastructure such as water, sewer, roads and sidewalks are in place; and
- a large portion of the C-2 District is located within the City's redevelopment area.

The County has taken the initiative in identifying the extent of the problem locally and has established an organizational framework to coordinate funding and implementation of programs for the homeless. The policies of the Housing Element relating to homelessness are based on facilitating and co-operating with this County effort, commensurate with the City's population and resources.

Residential Buildout

There is very little remaining vacant residentially zoned land in El Cerrito. Vacant land is limited to infill lots scattered throughout El Cerrito. The land use inventory indicates that there are 18.04 acres of vacant land within the City and approximately 42 acres within the Sphere of Influence. Additional housing can be constructed in the following three areas of the City:

1. On vacant land;
2. Underutilized and partially developed land; and
3. In redevelopment areas where existing uses can be replaced by more intense development.

The maximum number of residential units that can be constructed in the Planning Area has been calculated, taking into account the existing zoning, slope density standards and other applicable constraints of each site. Table 20 represents an inventory of the maximum potential housing, termed residential build-out, that could occur in El Cerrito.

TABLE 20: RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT FIGURES: EL CERRITO & SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Area	Maximum Number of Units	Type of Units
Within City limits		
Infill Parcels [vacant land]	165	44 multifamily & 121 single family units
Redevelopment	1,018	1,018 multifamily units
Total within City limits	1,183	
Sphere of Influence		
Infill Parcels	178	single family units
Total City and Sphere of Influence	1,361	

A detailed analysis of land available for residential development carried out in July 1990 is summarized in Table 21. The Housing Opportunity Sites [HOS] include vacant and underutilized parcels as well as parcels which could be redeveloped to build additional housing units. The majority of additional housing opportunity sites are located within redevelopment areas. Implementing the Mixed Use Zoning District is recommended to incorporate additional housing with commercial/retail uses in redevelopment areas. The active involvement of the Redevelopment Agency will be required to ensure that the City meets its regional housing needs allocations.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the residential build-out table: the City can meet its regional housing allocation of 722 units, since a total of 1,183 units can be built within City limits; the majority of the potential housing units (86%) will be multifamily; the supply of available residential land is limited and should be effectively and efficiently used to achieve the City's various housing needs; and, it may not be possible to meet all of the needs for very low and low income households. The fact that 86% of the potential new housing in the City will be multifamily contributes significantly, however, to the affordability of these units and to meeting the growing need for senior citizen's housing.

Table 21: Housing Opportunity Sites with Incentives Program

	Name of Site & Location	Parcel Number	Total Area¹⁴ [acres]	Zoning District & Residential Density	Maximum Units with Base Res. Densities	Proposed Incentives Program Residential Density	Additional Units with Incentives Program	Site Total
1	Audiss Trailer Park 5828 El Dorado St.	510-037-028	0.57	R 3 35 du/ac	20	45 du/ac	6	26
2	Cemetery Site Colusa Ave & Carmel St.	504-330-008	1.26	C-1/R3 35 du/ac	44			44
3	Del Norte BART Station ¹⁵ San Pablo Ave: between Cutting & Hill	504-160- 10,11,17,29: 504-170- 03,04,05,06,0 7,08,10,12	4.8	C 3/R3 35 du/ac	168	45 du/ac	48	216
4	El Cerrito Plaza BART Station Central and Richmond Sts.	510-160 & 170	[4.88] 2.88	C3/R3 35 du/ac	101	45 du/ac	30	131
5	El Cerrito Plaza ¹⁶ San Pablo Ave.& Fairmont Blvd.	510-160 & 170	[31] 10	C2/R3 35 du/ac	350	45 du/ac	100	450
6	IBEX Project Target Area 9 117 Block, East Side San Pablo Avenue	503-263- 01,13, 14,17, 22-29	2.06	C3/R3 35 du/ac	72	66 du/ac senior housing	64	136
7	Idaho Motel 10203 San Pablo Avenue	510-023-009	0.43	C 2 35 du/ac	15	45 du/ac	4	19
8	Portola Site 6431 Portola Avenue	503-121-019 & 020	0.89	C 2/R 3 35 du/ac	31	45 du/ac	9	40
9	Infill sites ¹⁷	throughout City	19.0	R-1, R-1 B1 & R- 1 B2	121	n/a		
	Total				922		261	1,183

The total number of housing units that could be built is $[922 + 261] = 1,183$ units.

14. Land area is indicated in net acres exclusive of right-of-ways. This figure is used to calculate maximum residential densities for parcels that can be developed without requiring additional roadway right-of-ways and which do not have other constraints. For parcels requiring right-of-way dedications, a Planned Unit Development [PUD] Plan is recommended where applicable to obtain variations in lot sizes and setbacks, in order to achieve well-designed projects at the desired densities.

15. High density multifamily residential development adjacent to the Del Norte BART Station is recommended by the BART Higher Density Residential Study; El Cerrito & Colma Station Areas prepared by Sedway & Associates for BART in December 1989.

16. Housing on this site shall be integrated into a Mixed Use development consisting of commercial, retail and multifamily housing. Housing on this site would not be intended to replace the commercial uses that now occur, but would enhance the diversity and intensity of commercial activity in this area. New housing would be built either through redevelopment of the entire 31 acres, or the development of a portion of this site, most appropriately, the area adjacent to El Cerrito Creek.

17. The infill sites scattered throughout the City in areas designated for single family residential use can accommodate another 121 units. The total amount of housing units that can be built in the redevelopment areas is 1018. The remaining units $[1,183 - 1,018 = 165]$ comprise the Cemetery Site with 44 units and another 121 infill units.

Constraints to Housing Development

The City requires payment of different fees as a condition of development approval. All fees are tied to the City's actual costs of providing necessary services such as project review and plan checking fees. These fees are reviewed and adjusted periodically. The most recent review of the City's development fees was completed in 1990. Fees for planning review are no longer charged on a flat rate, but on an hourly basis reflecting the actual costs of staff time to review a given project at the following hourly rates: Clerical \$19.25; Associate Planner \$25.75; City Planner; \$32.00; and City Engineer \$34.25. The City also exacts from developers physical improvements as allowed under municipal regulatory power. A Traffic Mitigation Fee and on- and off-site improvements pursuant to the City's subdivision ordinance are required. The schedule of other fees is available at the Planning Division.

The fees required for residential development are equal to or lower than neighboring cities, and are lower than comparable market-rate fees for technical plan review tasks. A description of on- and off-site requirements for residential development are contained in the City's Subdivision Ordinance. The City may also waive certain fees related to the development of low and moderate-income housing.

Building codes and enforcement do not provide a constraint to housing development. Requirements for parking, building setbacks and site improvements are no higher but rather comparable to other jurisdictions in the County. New construction is required to meet the requirements of the Uniform Building Code. An ongoing enforcement of building codes for rental properties is carried out to protect public health and safety. This program has not resulted in rent levels which are higher than similarly situated apartments in other nearby jurisdictions. Existing non-rental units are inspected only when an owner seeks a building permit for additional construction or when a specific complaint relating to the health and safety of the building occupants is received. In conformance with the UBC, the City does not require renovations constituting 50% or less than the total assessed value of the building to meet all the building codes in effect today.

The City's zoning and development standards do not constitute a constraint to housing development. Regulations regarding the development of single family homes such as set-backs, lot coverages, height limits, and minimum lot sizes are no more restrictive than those of other surrounding jurisdictions. Given the fact that over 90% of the additional housing that will be built in El Cerrito will be located in redevelopment areas, the City's Redevelopment Plan, Zoning Ordinance and related land use regulations serve to promote, rather than constrain housing development, for example:

- The Zoning Ordinance permits multifamily residential uses in the C-2 Commercial District.
- The Zoning Ordinance permits reduced and flexible parking standards for multifamily density senior housing developments.
- The Planned Unit Development concept is encouraged by the Redevelopment Plan and Zoning Ordinance. El Cerrito's PUD process permits housing developments to be built with flexible setback, lot coverage and other regulations and permits the construction of mixed-use developments.
- The density bonus requirements of the Zoning Ordinance have worked to provide over 75 very-low to low income units.

- The time taken to review and approve housing developments is relatively short due to several important factors. Additional housing will be built in areas with infrastructure in place, close to mass transit, roads and freeways, thereby reducing the need for extensive EIR preparation. The City's redevelopment agency and planning division continues to fast track housing developments, and these projects get first priority in the review of planning applications. The average time for approval of below market rate housing projects, for example, has been under twelve months.

The time taken to process development applications affects housing costs, since interest on loans must continue to be paid and the longer it takes for the development to be approved, the higher the costs will be. The time to process residential developments does not constitute a constraint in El Cerrito. The average time for development review for a 100 unit residential project is from twelve to eighteen months, which is comparable to the time taken for processing similar projects in surrounding cities. It is anticipated that implementation of the policies contained in this Housing Element will reduce the time required for reviewing projects incorporating affordable housing units.

Market constraints include the cost of land and improvements, construction costs, interest rates, profit, property taxes and the wide range of factors which determine consumer preference in the housing market. Most of these factors are beyond control of local governments, although occasionally the cost of land and interest rates can be reduced in order to encourage affordable housing production.

The availability of financing is a key component in determining the affordability of homes. Small increases in the interest rates can have a significant impact on the amount of monthly mortgage payments, and thereby limit many people from qualifying for a home loan.

The cost of housing in El Cerrito has increased more rapidly than income, the rate of inflation and the Consumer Price Index. An informal survey of local developers indicated the following range of costs for construction of a single family home in the City;

cost of a finished lot	\$200,000 and up [eg. ready to build: sewer, water, grading, roads and utilities]
construction costs	\$75 to \$85 per sq. ft.
fees paid to City	\$2,000. per unit [average]

The cost of multifamily housing is generally similar with the exception that per unit land costs are reduced only marginally, since the market value of residential land is directly related to the total number of units that can be built on a given site. The developers contacted in the informal survey stated that the price of land was the most significant and fastest rising cost component.

There is no shortage of construction or mortgage financing in El Cerrito for new construction or rehabilitation. Discussions with contractors, developers, and real estate brokers indicated no mortgage deficient areas or 'redlining' practices in El Cerrito. Interest rates are consistent with those found throughout central Contra Costa County.

It can be concluded that there are two principal constraints to housing development in El Cerrito. The most important constraint is that the city is virtually built out, and no additional units beyond those identified in the Housing Opportunity Sites can be built. The second constraint relates to the characteristics of the housing market, since fewer new home buyers can afford to finance the average priced El Cerrito home costing \$192,000.

Community Sentiment

Community attitudes toward housing play a crucial role in determining the type and cost of housing that will be built in the City. The workshops and public hearings conducted on the Housing Element indicated community support for significant increases in the number of higher density multifamily housing in the San Pablo Avenue/BART corridor.

A key to successfully obtaining development approvals is to obtain the support of the local neighborhood. Developers of potentially controversial housing projects should make the effort to address the legitimate community concerns regarding the type of housing proposed, the characteristics of the potential occupants of the housing units, noise, increases in traffic, and the impact that the proposed development will have on City services. Involving the community in the early phases of a project is essential for creating the basis for cooperation and constructive participation in the planning process.

Despite recent public support for increased multifamily housing in the San Pablo Avenue/BART corridor, approval of specific housing projects are often controversial. Although the Planning Commission and the City Council should be responsive to the wishes of the residents of the City, these bodies must also take responsibility for the overall public benefit that would result from approving potentially controversial multifamily housing developments which are in compliance with the City's existing land use regulations.

Opportunities for Energy Conservation

The City encourages energy conservation in residential projects. All residential projects are reviewed in terms of building orientation, street layout, lot design, landscaping, and street tree configuration in order to maximize solar access and energy conservation. Residential structures must meet the requirements of Title 24 relating to energy conservation features of the Uniform Building Code. In addition, much of the higher density multifamily-designated land is located within walking distance to BART, transit stops and commercial centers, thereby reducing the potential demand for automobile fuel.

Appendix A: Summary of Quantified Objectives for 1990 to 1994

Rehabilitation & Conservation of Units	IP.2	1300 units inspected biannually
Rehabilitation Preservation of Units	IP.4	50 units per year for 5 years
Relocation of Mobile Home Residents	IP.7	100 persons
Adaptive Reuse	IP.10	15 units (depending on feasibility)
Second Dwelling Units	IP.11	10 units per year for 5 years
Senior Housing	IP.12	100 senior housing units
Redevelopment Agency	IP.13	204 affordable units using 20% set-aside funds
Affordable Senior Housing	IP.13	75 affordable senior housing units
Accessible Units for the Physically Handicapped	IP.14	51 units
Units for Handicapped Persons	IP.14	51 handicapped accessible units
Units for Large Families	IP.15	50 units for large families
Density Bonus Regulations	IP.17	152 very low income units 104 low income units 231 senior income units
Emergency & Transitional Housing	IP.26	Designate area suitable for 30 to 40 bed facility

Appendix B: Evaluation of Previous Housing Element

Program	Purpose	Evaluation & Impact on this Element
Affordability: 1.A. Incentives Program	Density bonuses to provide BMR units	Successful: provided at least 50 BMR units through this program: Continued.
1.C. , 4.A., 4.B.,4.D.	Revisions to Zoning Ordinance and General Plan to increase number of affordable housing units.	Completed. New programs build on this foundation by increasing the role of the Redevelopment Agency in providing additional BMR units.
2.A. BMR Housing Sites	Identify sites for BMR housing.	Continued and expanded to include the entire redevelopment area. The revised element includes the redevelopment area in the Housing Opportunity Sites since the city has few infill parcels left.
2.B Assist developers of BMR housing	Assist developers of BMR housing via tax increment and other funding sources.	Successful: provided over 150 units of BMR housing. Continued and expanded.
2.C Priority processing for BMR developers	Process BMR housing with first priority to ensure minimum delay.	Successful ongoing program. Continued. Majority of new housing will be built with Redevelopment participation, thereby ensuring fast track processing continues.
Housing Conservation: 1.A. Develop rehabilitation financing	Participation in rehabilitation loan program. This program is carried out jointly with the Certificate of Occupancy program that examines 1300 rental units per year for UBC compliance.	Moderately successful. Met the program goal of 5 units per year for 3 of 5 years. Not enough people applied for this program, despite C of O program. Continued with expanded program IP.4 which emphasizes increased advertising of this program and more incentives by obtaining grant funding.
1.B. Energy Conservation	Increase residential energy conservation up to 43 units/year	Successful: Program goals met and this program is being continued. Relates to IP.2 Certificate of Occupancy Program.
2.A-C. Housing Support Services	Housing rehabilitation and maintenance	Not successful: few people applied for program. This program being discontinued and IP.2, IP.4, IP.5 replace this program in new element.

Program	Purpose	Evaluation & Impact on this Element
1.C, 3.B. Rehabilitation Building Code and CIP	Changes to building code and development of housing oriented revisions to CIP	Completed successfully. No new program needed.
8.A. Mobile home park conversion	Convert mobile home park to other uses.	Moderately successful: one mobile home park converted. New element contains similar program, with protections for mobile home residents.
<u>Special Needs:</u> 2.A. Incentives Program:	Density bonuses to provide BMR units	Successful: provided at least 50 BMR units through this program: Continued.
2.E. Barrier free design criteria	Completion of Design Guidelines.	Successful: Guidelines completed. No new program required.
3.4 Day Care	Develop fire, building, reg's. for Day Care providers and amend the Zoning Ordinance pursuant to SB163.	Completed successfully.
4.D Emergency Housing	Support emergency housing	Moderately successful: funds allocated by City to providers. New program strengthened in compliance with State law.
4.E. Mixed Use Zoning	Revise Zoning Ordinance to permit mixed use zoning	Successful: completed. New element builds on this by programs to focus new BMR units in mixed use areas.

Appendix B

Traffic Data

Traffic Technical Appendix

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of El Cerrito developed as a suburb of Oakland and San Francisco. San Pablo Avenue served as the primary travel corridor providing for private automobiles, buses and passenger rail along its length. San Pablo Avenue still functions as the main arterial within El Cerrito, partially as a result of the City's development pattern around San Pablo Avenue, but also as a result of the topography of the City which makes north-south travel in many parts of El Cerrito difficult. Although San Pablo is still a major server of regional traffic and transit, the development of Interstate 80 and BART dramatically changed El Cerrito diverting regional vehicular and transit traffic away from San Pablo Avenue. In addition, the construction of the BART stations in El Cerrito introduced new traffic dynamics, with the BART stations, particularly the Del Norte BART Station, becoming major peak period destinations where west county commuters drive into El Cerrito and park their cars in order to take BART.

STREET NETWORK AND ROADWAY DESIGNATIONS

El Cerrito has a hierarchy of highways and streets. El Cerrito lacks a central business district with a traditional grid pattern of streets. Instead, the City is developed along San Pablo Avenue, which serves as the spine. El Cerrito's existing streets and their functional classifications are shown in Figure 1, and described below.

Freeways. Freeways are high speed facilities with restricted access that move intercity or regional traffic. Access to freeways is limited to grade-separated interchanges. Interstate 80 is the major freeway serving El Cerrito although Interstate 580 is also located in the area. Interstate 80 between the San Francisco Bay Bridge and State Route 4 is one of the most congested freeways in the San Francisco Bay Area. Historically, Interstate 80 has been heavily congested in the southbound (westbound) direction in the AM peak period and the northbound (eastbound) direction in the PM peak period. Caltrans has recently completed construction of high occupancy vehicle lanes on the portion of I-80 near El Cerrito and will soon be completing the remainder of the ramp improvements on I-80.

Three interchanges provide access from Interstate 80 to El Cerrito.

The Central Avenue Interchange is the first El Cerrito Interchange from the south. Although the interchange is located in the City of Richmond, as is the Interstate 580 Interchange with Central Avenue, Central Avenue is the primary travel route to southern El Cerrito, the El Cerrito Plaza and the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station.

The Carlson Boulevard Interchanges with Interstate 80 and 580 are also located in the City of Richmond. Although these interchanges provide access to areas of the Annex, they provide limited benefit to the City of El Cerrito because there is no direct connection between Carlson Boulevard and San Pablo Avenue.

The Cutting Boulevard / Potrero Avenue Interchange with Interstate 80 is an odd split interchange with Cutting Boulevard providing the northbound I-80 on- and off-ramps and Potrero Avenue providing the southbound Interstate 80 on- and off-ramps. Normally, the two halves of a split interchange are connected to one another by frontage roads on either side of the freeway. In the Del Norte area, the unusual freeway ramp configuration, in combination with the heavy traffic flows to and from local businesses, adjacent residential areas and the BART Station

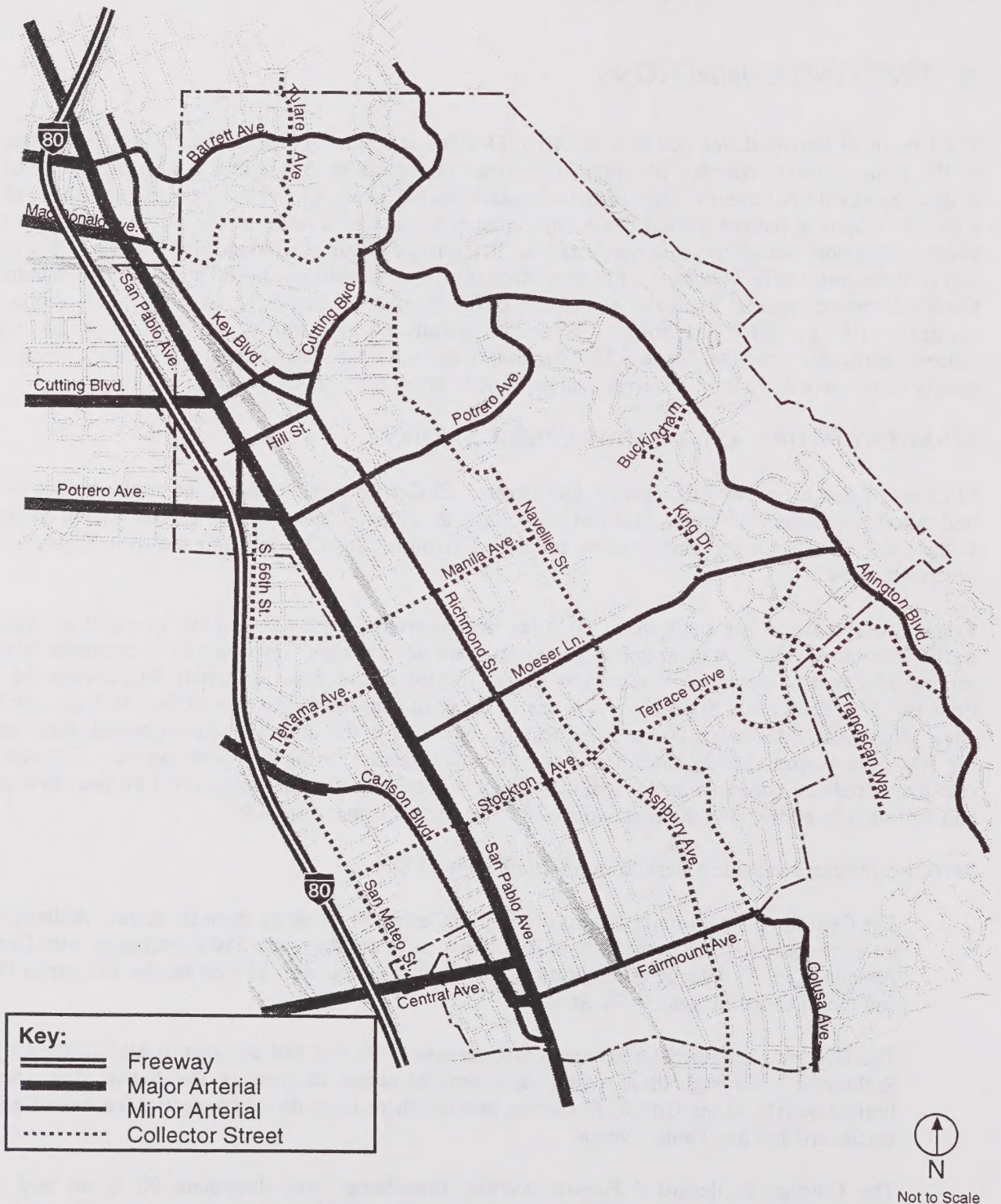


Figure 1

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**ROADWAY
CLASSIFICATION**



creates congestion. Congestion can be particularly frustrating for vehicles traveling on San Pablo Avenue because of the number of successive signalized intersections with relatively high average vehicle delays.

Major Arterial Streets. An important function of major arterial streets is to provide efficient intra-city and inter-city mobility. Generally, arterial streets also provide some access to adjacent land uses. Major arterials are not intended for longer inter-city trips, such as trips from Richmond to Albany on San Pablo Avenue. In El Cerrito, major arterial streets provide two lanes of travel in each direction and separate turn lanes at many locations. Most major intersections are controlled by signalized intersections and in many locations turning movements are restricted by medians. Major arterials are San Pablo Avenue and the portions of Cutting Boulevard, Potrero Avenue, and Central Avenue west of San Pablo Avenue.

Minor Arterial Streets. An important function of minor arterial streets is to provide efficient intra-city mobility and to provide access to adjacent land uses. Minor arterials typically provide one lane of travel in each direction with turn lanes at major intersections. Many intersection are controlled by traffic signals, but stop sign control is also common, normally with stops on the minor streets only. Minor arterials are the Richmond Street - Key Boulevard corridor, Barrett Avenue, Arlington Boulevard (Arlington Boulevard), the portions of Cutting Boulevard, Hill Street, Potrero Avenue, Moeser Lane and Fairmount Avenue east of San Pablo Avenue, and the portion of Colusa Avenue south of Fairmount Avenue. Extensions of Moeser Lane between San Pablo Avenue and Carlson Boulevard and Fairmount Avenue between Colusa Avenue and Arlington Boulevard are also planned minor arterials in the City's current General Plan.

Collector Streets. Collector streets provide both mobility and land use access in about an equal proportion. These roadways move vehicular, pedestrians, and bicycle traffic within and between areas. As their name implies, a function of collector streets is to collect traffic from local streets and channel it to the arterial street system. Examples of collector streets in El Cerrito include the Colusa Avenue - Avis Drive - Navellier Street - Ganges Street - Fairview Avenue corridor, Manila Avenue, and Stockton Avenue.

Local Streets. Local streets (not highlighted in Figure 1) primarily serve land use access. One of the functions of these low speed roadways is to provide access between land uses and collector streets as well as to provide for local circulation. Local streets serve all types of land use including residential, and commercial. Often, local streets in residential areas are utilized by through traffic resulting in complaints from residents about speeding and high volumes.

The functional definitions should not be interpreted as the sole or even primary functions of these streets. More traditional street typologies (residential street, commercial main street, avenue, boulevard, etc.) also need study as to their applicability.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND PATTERNS

Peaking Characteristics - Existing traffic volumes were established with traffic counts conducted in March of 1996 for the Del Norte area, March of 1997 for the Plaza area and March of 1998 for the remainder of the City. A total of 30 intersections were counted in the PM peak period. In addition to peak period turning movement counts, which are used to assess intersection service levels, three three-week-long continuous counts were conducted. The primary continuous count was conducted on San Pablo Avenue just south of Moeser Lane. This count, which is presented in Figure 2, is intended to identify normal peaking characteristics in El Cerrito. This location was chosen because it is centrally located in the City, it is along a major travel route but at a point with little congestion, and it is not immediately adjacent to a BART station.

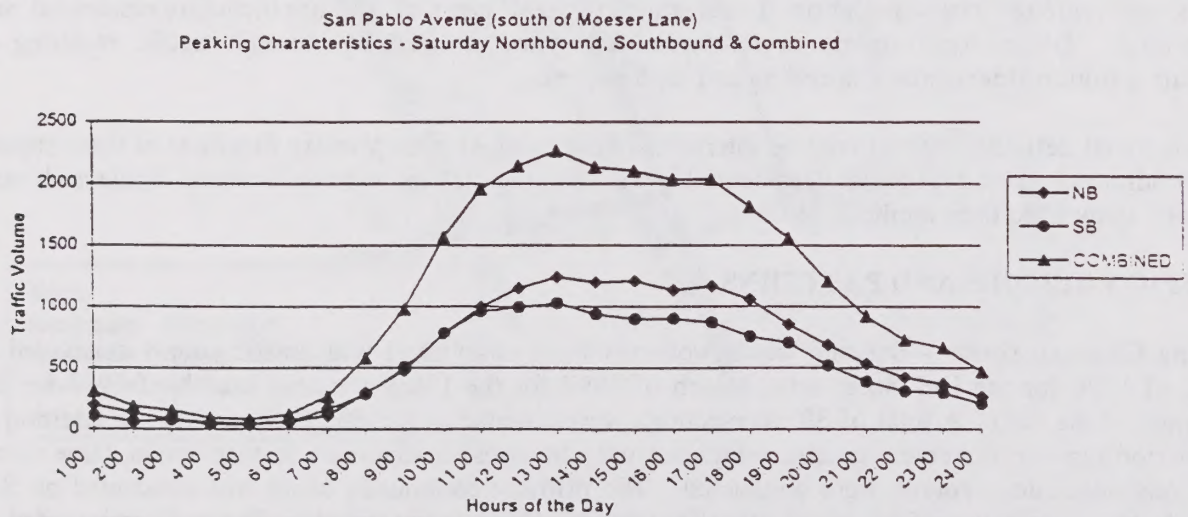
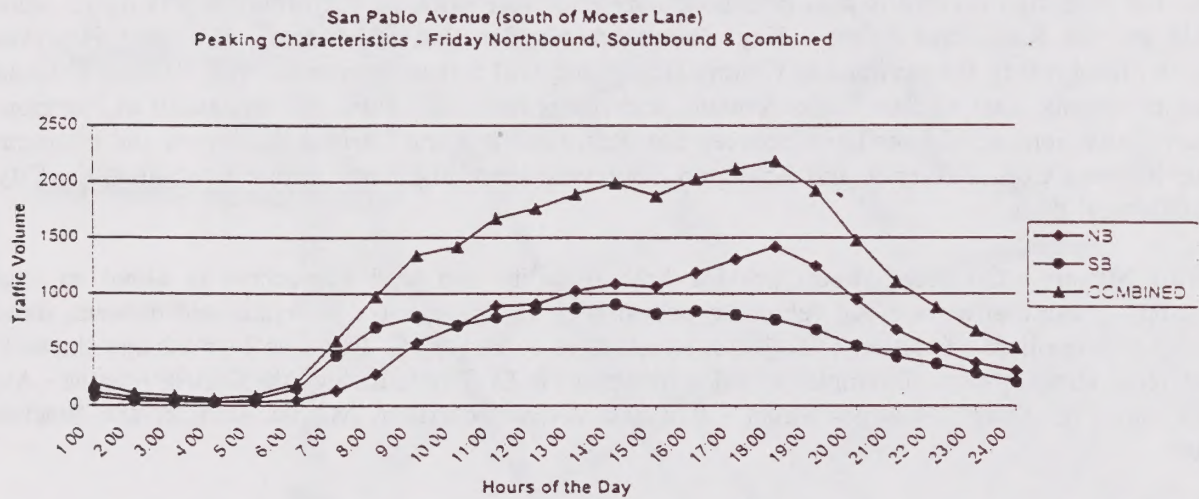
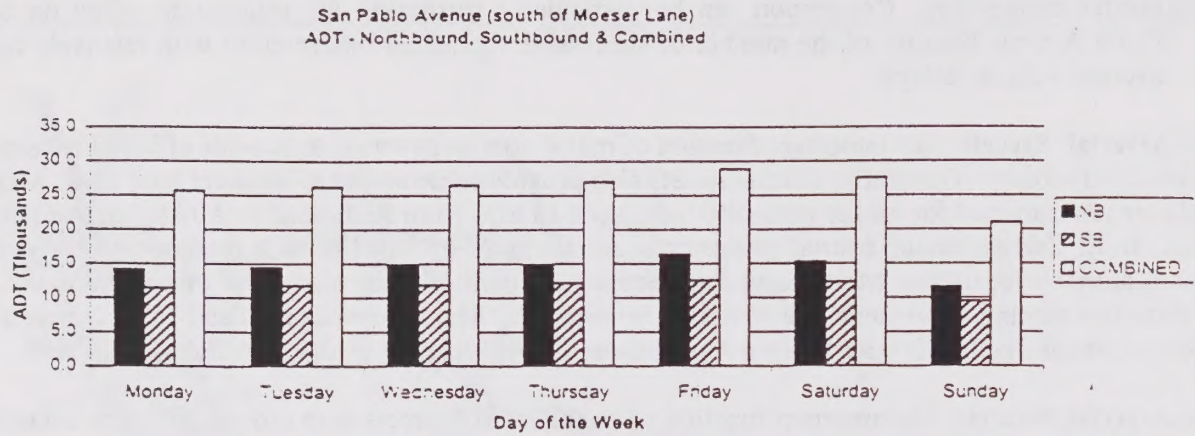


Figure 2

PEAKING CHARACTERISTICS



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Figure 2 (top graph) presents an average of three weeks traffic on San Pablo Avenue south of Moeser Lane. Traffic volumes at the subject segment of San Pablo Avenue are greater than 25,000 vehicles per day throughout the week. On Thursdays and Fridays, traffic is slightly higher than other days, with Friday representing the busiest day. Saturday traffic is also high, and directional splits (the number traveling vehicles traveling northbound versus southbound) are more balanced. Traffic flows on San Pablo Avenue are directionally imbalanced, with more traffic traveling northbound than southbound over the course of the day. This is unusual because traffic flows over a 24-hour period are normally balanced, but is an indication that San Pablo Avenue and Interstate 80 are a joint system. Currently more southbound traffic in the Interstate 80 - San Pablo Avenue corridor travels on Interstate 80 within El Cerrito.

Figure 2 (middle graph) presents the hourly peaking characteristics for San Pablo Avenue for an average of the three Fridays counted. On San Pablo Avenue south of Moeser Lane, the AM peak period (7:00 to 9:00) is relatively light, but by 11:00 AM traffic flows are heavy and continue to be high through the early evening hours. This peaking characteristic is also a reflection of the hours of operation of adjacent uses. Similar counts conducted in the Del Norte area (1996) and Plaza area (1997) show higher AM peak period traffic flows and continued high flows until 7:00 PM.

EXISTING LEVELS OF SERVICE

Levels of service (LOS) is a qualitative and quantitative description of operations defined in terms of a letter grade and either the volume to capacity ratio or total stopped delay per vehicle during the peak hour. Levels of service range from *LOS A*, representing free flow conditions to *LOS F* which signifies excessive delays, long vehicle queues, and generally intolerable conditions. The level of service criteria described above is defined in the 1994 *Highway Capacity Manual* prepared by the Transportation Research Board. For freeways, level of service is based on congested speeds, but relationships are also drawn between volume to capacity ratios and levels of service (See Table 1). Volume-to-capacity (V/C) is a planning-level assessment of traffic operations providing a ratio of the existing or projected volume to the theoretical capacity of a facility. A V/C of 1.0 indicates that the facility operates at capacity and represents *LOS E*.

Table 1 Level of Service Definitions for Freeways

Level of Service	Definition	V/C Ratio
A	Completely free flow conditions	0 - 0.28
B	Free flow by the presence of other vehicles begins to be noticeable	0.29 - 0.45
C	The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is now clearly affected by the presence of other vehicles	0.46 - 0.67
D	Travel speed begins to be reduced by increasing volumes	0.68 - 0.85
E	Vehicles are operating with the minimum spacing at which uniform flow can be maintained	0.86 - 1.00
F	forced or breakdown flow	Greater than 1.00

Source: 1994 *Highway Capacity Manual* (Special Report 209), Transportation Research Board.

For signalized intersections, level of service is defined by the volume-to-capacity ratio. At unsignalized intersections, the average stopped delay defines LOS. Table 2, below, provides the qualitative and quantitative descriptions of levels of service for signalized and unsignalized intersections.

Table 2 Level of Service Definitions for Intersections

Level of Service	Signalized Intersections	Unsignalized Intersections
A	Uncongested operations, all queues clear in a single cycle. Volume to capacity ratio of 0.00 to 0.60.	No delay for stop controlled approaches. Delay equals 0 to 5 seconds.
B	Uncongested operations, all queues clear in a single cycle. Volume to capacity ratio of 0.61 to 0.70.	Minor delay for stop controlled approaches. Delay equals 5.1 to 10 seconds.
C	Light congestion, occasional backups on critical approaches. Volume to capacity ratio of 0.71 to 0.80.	Moderate delay for stop controlled approaches. Delay equals 10.1 to 20 seconds.
D	Significant congestion of critical approaches but intersection remains functional. Some vehicles required to wait through more than one cycle during brief periods. No long queues formed. Volume to capacity ratio of 0.81 to 0.90.	Long delay for stop controlled approaches. Delay equals 20.1 to 30 seconds.
E	Severe congestion with long standing queues on critical approaches. Blockage of intersection may occur if intersection does not provide protected left turns. Queues may extend into adjacent intersections. Volume to capacity ratio of 0.91 to 0.99.	Very long delays for stop controlled approaches. Reaching level of tolerance for average driver. Delay equals 30.1 to 45 seconds.
F	Total breakdown, stop and go operations. Volume to capacity ratio of 1.00 or greater.	Extreme congestion, intolerable delay for stop controlled approaches. Delay equals 45.1 seconds or greater.

Source: 1994 *Highway Capacity Manual* (Special Report 209) and *Circular 212*, Transportation Research Board.

Intersections. Figure 3 identifies existing study intersections and Figures 4A through 4D identify PM peak hour turning movements, geometries and service levels. Of the 30 intersections, 21 operate at LOS A, 5 operate at LOS B, 2 operate at LOS C and 1 operates at LOS D. There are no intersections which operate at LOS E or F under existing conditions.

Although most intersections operate at LOS C or better, perceptions of traffic near Del Norte BART, other portions of San Pablo Avenue and the Central Avenue Interchange may be that existing operations are LOS E/F conditions. When signals are located in close proximity to one another, the cumulative delay of traveling through a system of signals can be high resulting in effective operations of an arterial segment worse than the individual intersection.

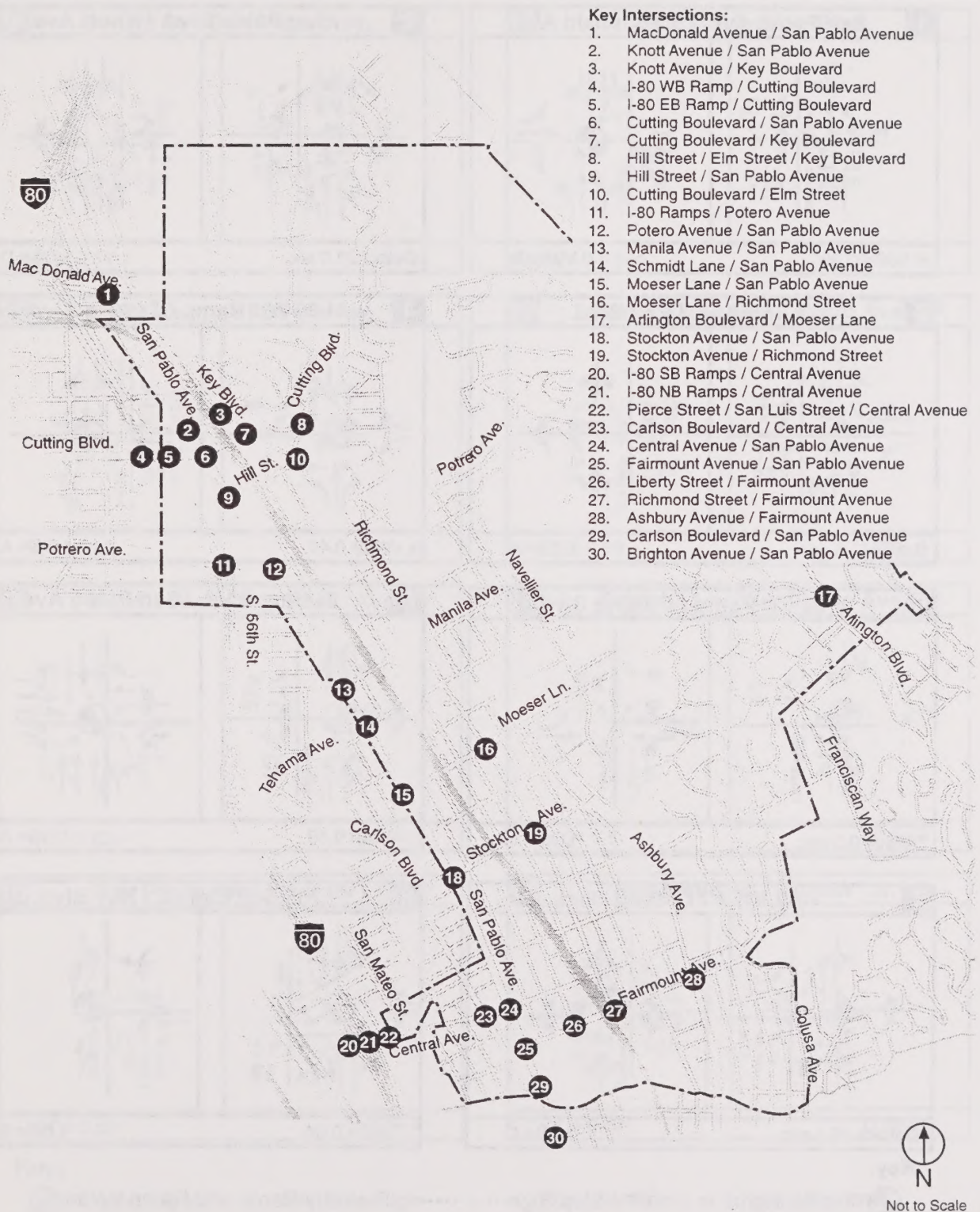
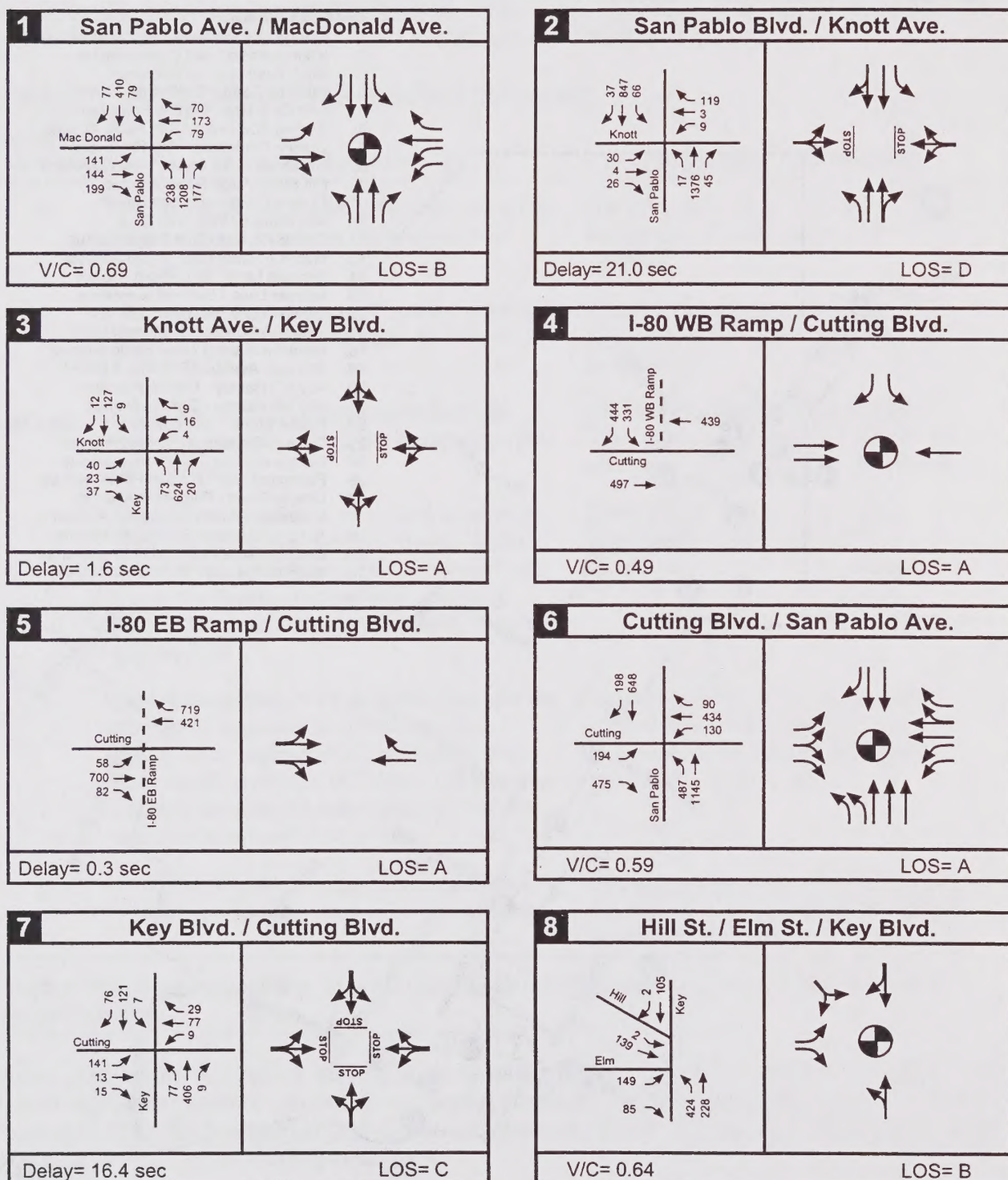


Figure 3

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**KEY
INTERSECTIONS**





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



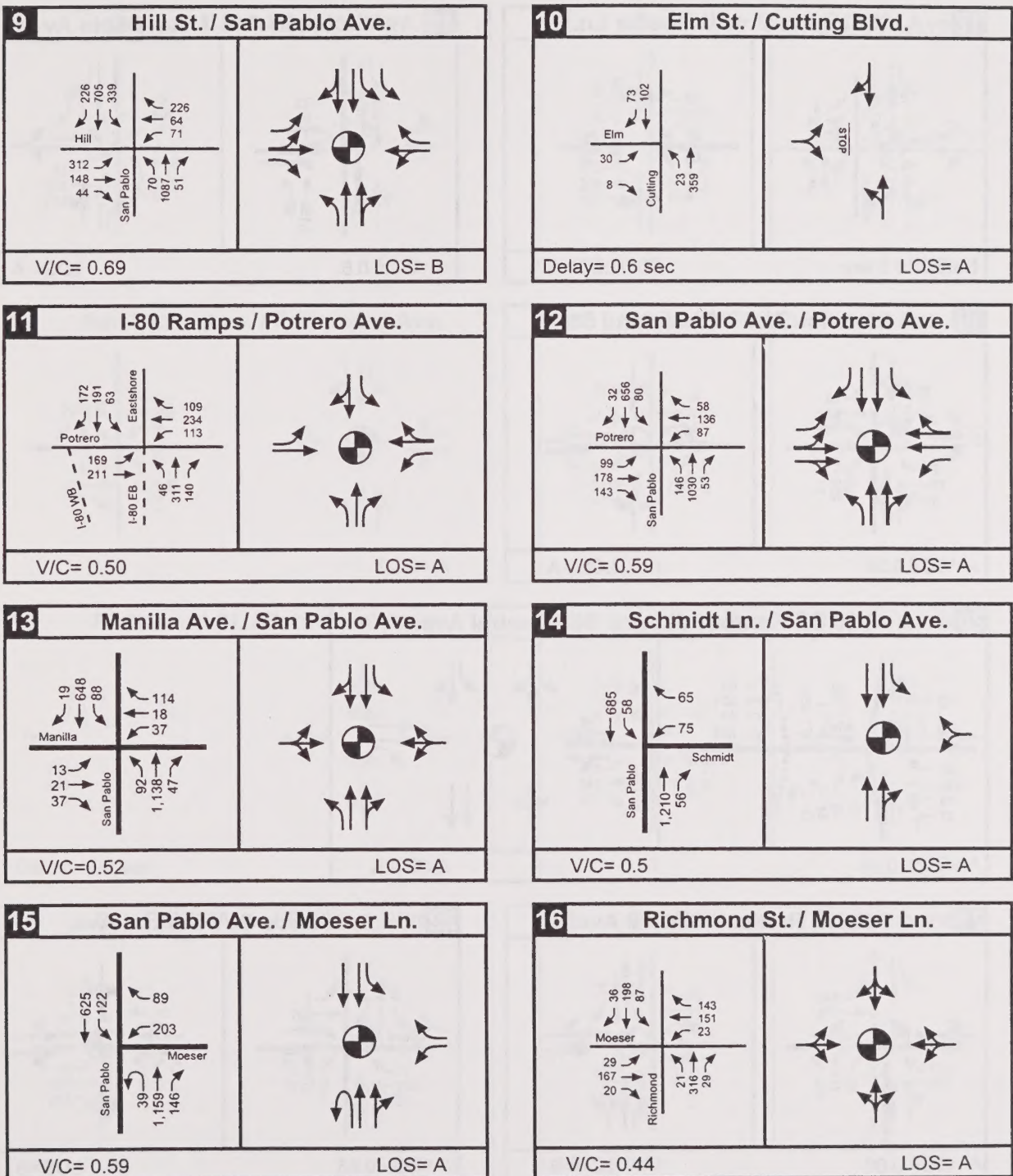
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 4A

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EXISTING
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



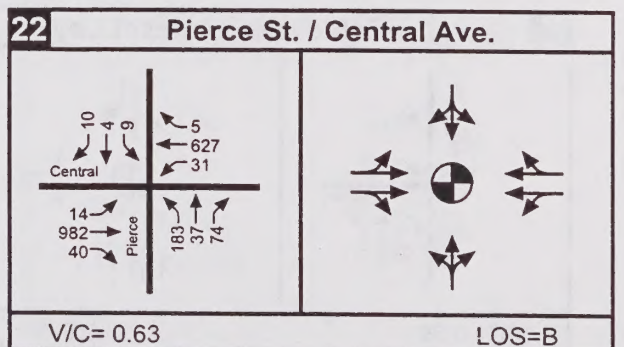
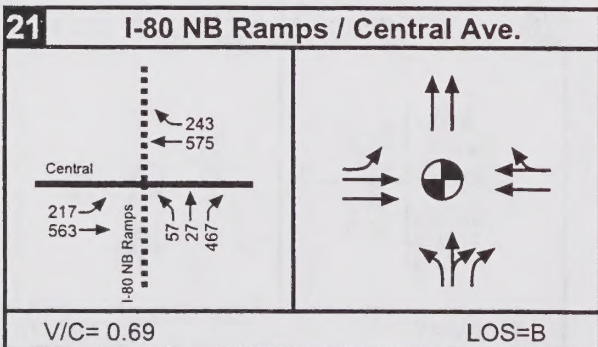
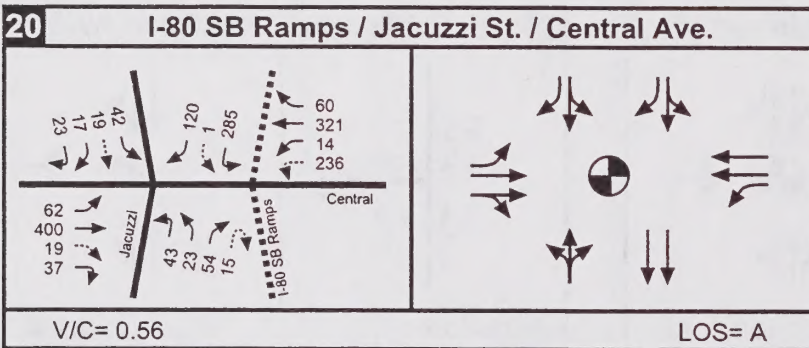
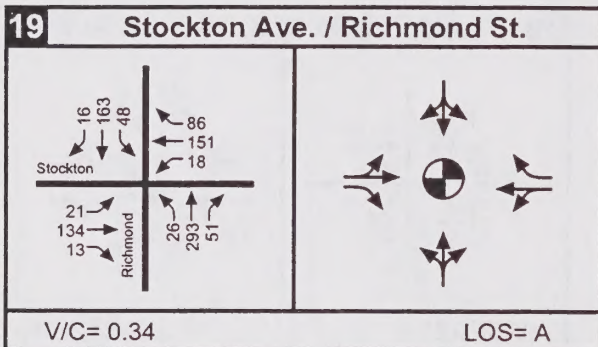
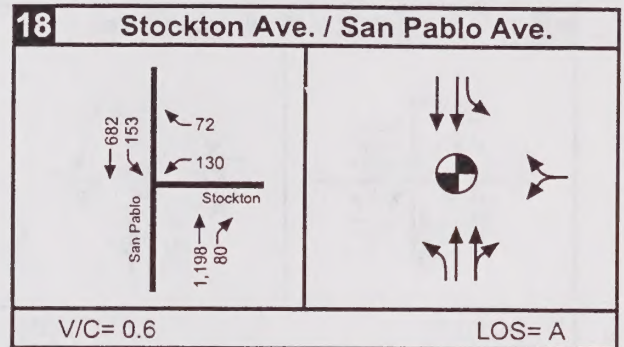
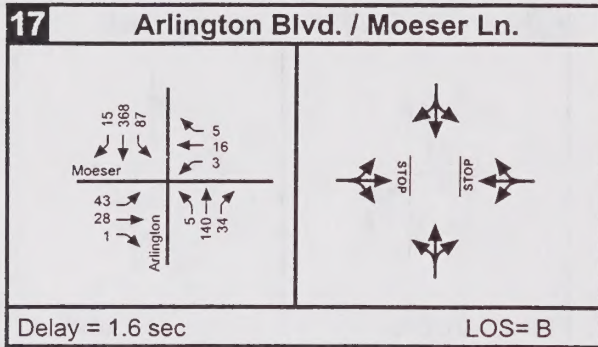
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 4B

**EXISTING
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS**



1151-32-B



Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



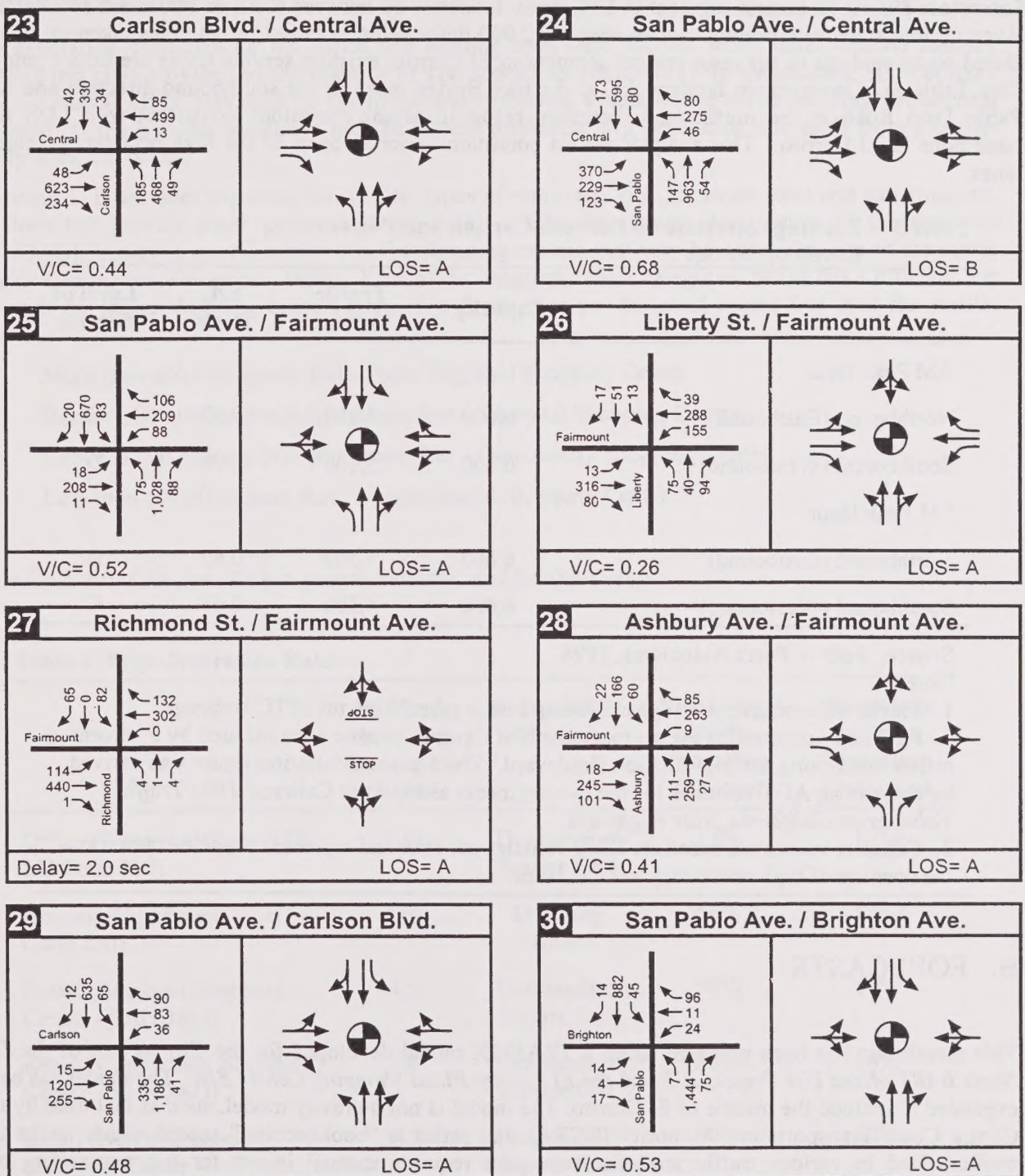
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 4C

1151-33-B

**EXISTING
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS**





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 4D

1151-34-B

**EXISTING
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS**



Interstate 80. At its busiest segment in El Cerrito, Interstate 80 between Carlson Boulevard and Potrero Avenue, Interstate 80 currently carries about 152,000 daily vehicles based on volumes taken in 1994. Based on an analysis of the most critical segment in El Cerrito, existing service levels are LOS C and D (See Table 3). Downstream bottlenecks, at the Bay Bridge maze in the southbound direction and San Pablo Dam Road in the northbound direction, result in actual operations consistent with LOS E/F conditions in El Cerrito. This analysis reflect conditions prior to open of the high occupancy vehicle lanes.

Table 3 Existing Interstate 80 Between Carlson and Potrero Levels of Service

	Capacity	Traffic Volume	V/C Ratio	Level of Service
AM Peak Hour				
Northbound (Eastbound)	6,600	3,500	0.53	C
Southbound (Westbound)	6,600	5,000	0.76	D
PM Peak Hour				
Northbound (Eastbound)	6,600	5,500	0.83	D
Southbound (Westbound)	6,600	4,300	0.65	C

Source: Fehr & Peers Associates, 1998.

Notes:

1. Traffic volumes represent year 1994 and were taken from the MTC webpage.
2. Reported volumes for the segment north of Central Avenue were inflated by 5 percent to reflect conditions north of Carlson Boulevard. The 5 percent inflation figure was derived by comparing ADT volumes for the two segments as report in Caltrans' 1995 *Traffic Volumes on California State Highways*.
3. Capacity values are based on 2,200 vehicles per lane and represent capacities prior to the opening of high occupancy vehicle lanes.

B. FORECASTS

This assessment has been prepared using a TRAFFIX model developed for the City as part of the *Del Norte BART Mixed Use Project EIR* and the *El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center EIR*. The model has been expanded to include the middle of El Cerrito. The model is not a gravity model, such as that used by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), but rather a "bookkeeping" model which tracks the traffic added in various traffic analysis zones, but requires manual inputs for trip generation, trip distribution and trip assignment. The assumptions used in these areas are described below.

TRIP GENERATION

Trip generation estimates for the office and housing uses were derived using transportation industry standard trip rates provided by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (*Trip Generation*, Sixth Edition, 1997). General office was used for the office and represents a stand-alone office building. Apartment was used for the housing because it had the highest residential trip generation rate aside from a single-family detached home.

For retail, ITE provides trip rates for specific types of retail uses (i.e. hardware store and supermarket), but does not provide more generalized trip rates. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), however, provides trip rates for shopping centers that vary based on the size of the center (*Traffic Generators*, December, 1996). Each of the shopping center categories below has a different trip rate with the larger shopping centers generating fewer trips per thousand square feet than the smaller centers.

More than 600,000 square feet - Super Regional Shopping Center

Between 300,000 and 600,000 square feet – Regional Shopping Center

Between 100,000 and 300,000 square feet – Community Shopping Center

Less than 100,000 square feet - Neighborhood Shopping Center

Table 4 identifies the specific trip generation rates used for this analysis.

Table 4 Trip Generation Rates

	PM Peak Hour Trip Generation Rates	Independent Variable	Percentage of Trips Travelling Inbound	Percentage of Trips Travelling Outbound
Office (General Office – ITE LU Code 710)	1.49	Thousands of Square Feet	17%	83%
Housing (Apartment – LU Code 220)	0.62	Dwelling Units	68%	32%)
Retail (Regional Shopping Center - SANDAG)	4.5	Thousands of Square Feet	50%	50%
Retail (Community Shopping Center - SANDAG)	7.0	Thousands of Square Feet	50%	50%
Retail (Neighborhood Shopping Center - SANDAG)	13.2	Thousands of Square Feet	50%	50%

TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Trip distribution refers to the travel patterns of trips generated by developments. Trip distribution assumptions are based on the CCTA West County Model. Trip distribution assumptions were derived separately for office, housing and retail land uses. These are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Trip Distribution Assumptions

	Travelling To and From Areas North of El Cerrito	Travelling To and From Areas South of El Cerrito	Travelling To and From Areas East of El Cerrito	Travelling To and From Areas West of El Cerrito	Travelling to Areas Within El Cerrito
Office	23%	32%	5%	13%	27%
Housing	22%	32%	5%	16%	25%
Retail	20%	31%	6%	13%	30%

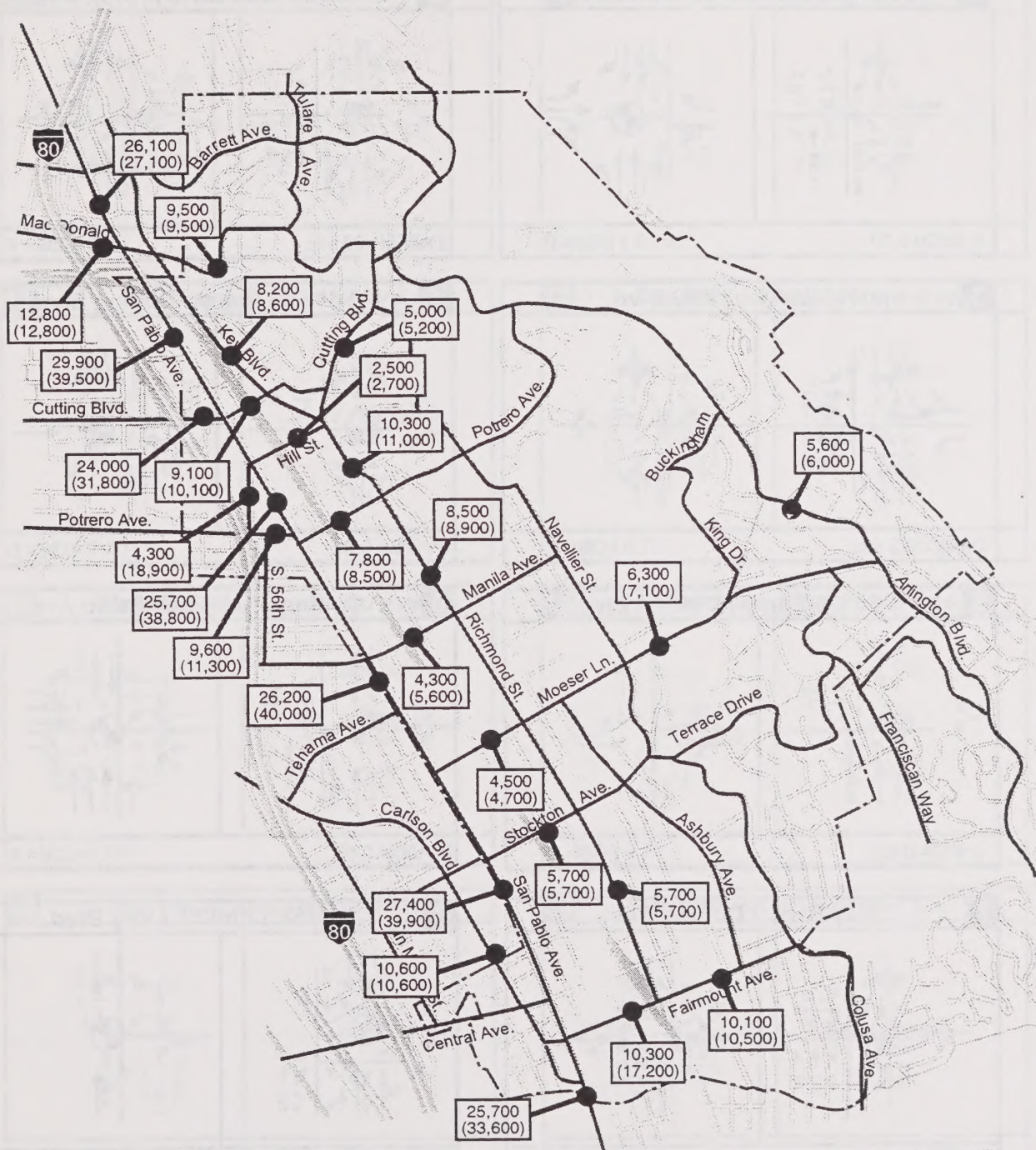
TRIP ASSIGNMENT

Vehicle trips were assigned based on shortest path, assuming that vehicles will use the most direct routes and routes providing the shortest travel times between origins and destinations.

FINDINGS

Traffic in El Cerrito will continue to be heavily influenced by conditions on Interstate 80. While the City may take a position that it will discourage regional traffic on San Pablo Avenue, the City's ability to control regional traffic flows on local streets is limited. The forecasts made for General Plan build-out conditions assume a five percent increase in regional traffic flows. El Cerrito transportation is also heavily influenced by BART and could change dramatically if BART were to extend service further along the Richmond line, making the Del Norte BART station less of a regional facility. The General Plan forecasts do not assume a BART extension and include a five percent increase in traffic to BART stations.

Figure 5 shows daily traffic volumes on major street in El Cerrito under General Plan build-out conditions. Figures 6A through 6D show PM peak hour traffic forecasts and intersection service levels. Traffic on most residential streets in El Cerrito will remain relatively constant. Along minor arterials, traffic will grow by about 5 to 10 percent, with the exceptions of the Eastshore Boulevard and the portion of Fairmount Avenue near San Pablo Avenue, which have projected growth of about 65 percent. Along major arterials, traffic will grow by about 30 to 50 percent.



Key:
123 (234) = Existing (Buildout) Volumes



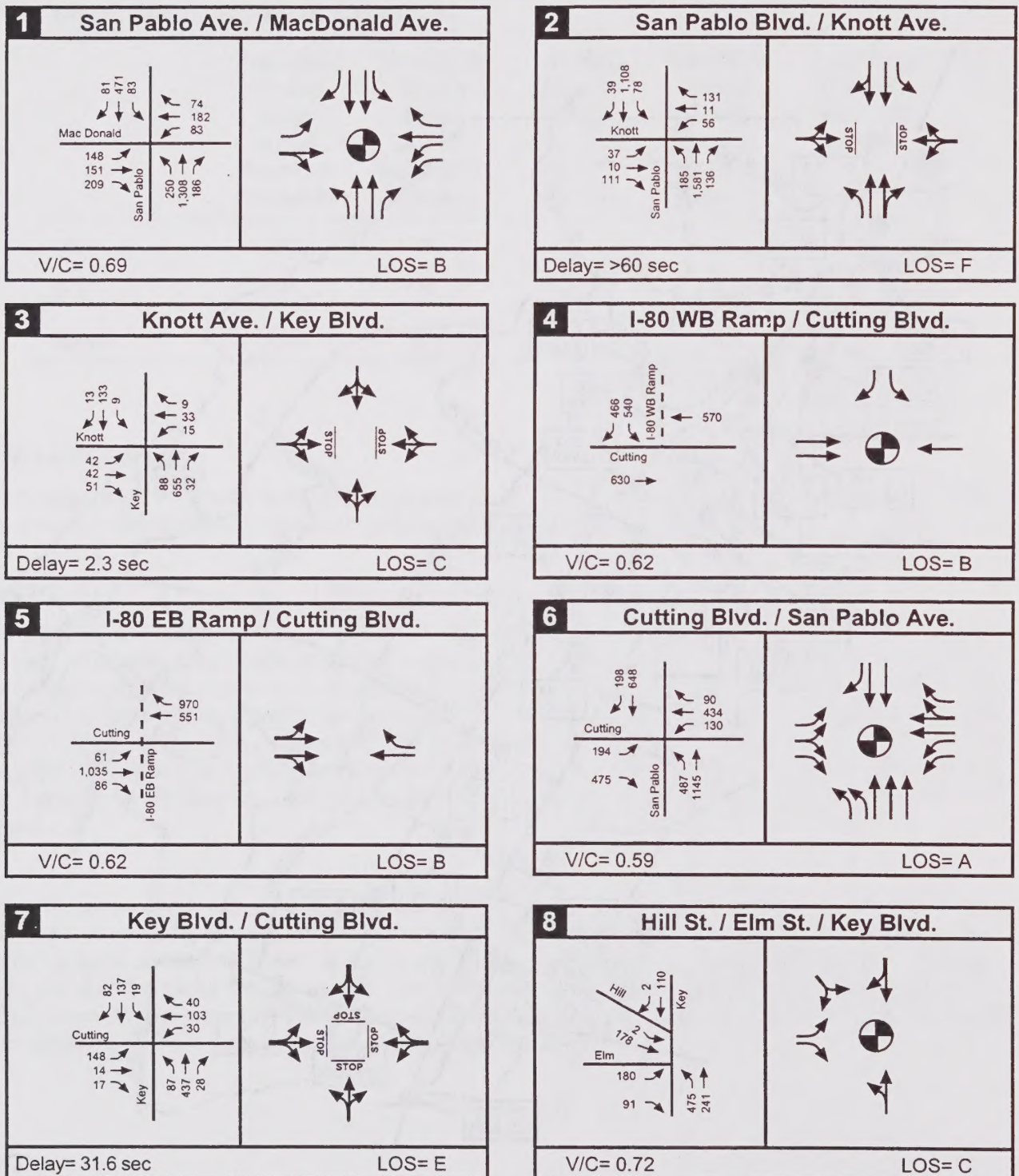
Not to Scale

Figure 5

**TRAFFIC VOLUMES
1998 / GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT**



1151-81-01



Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



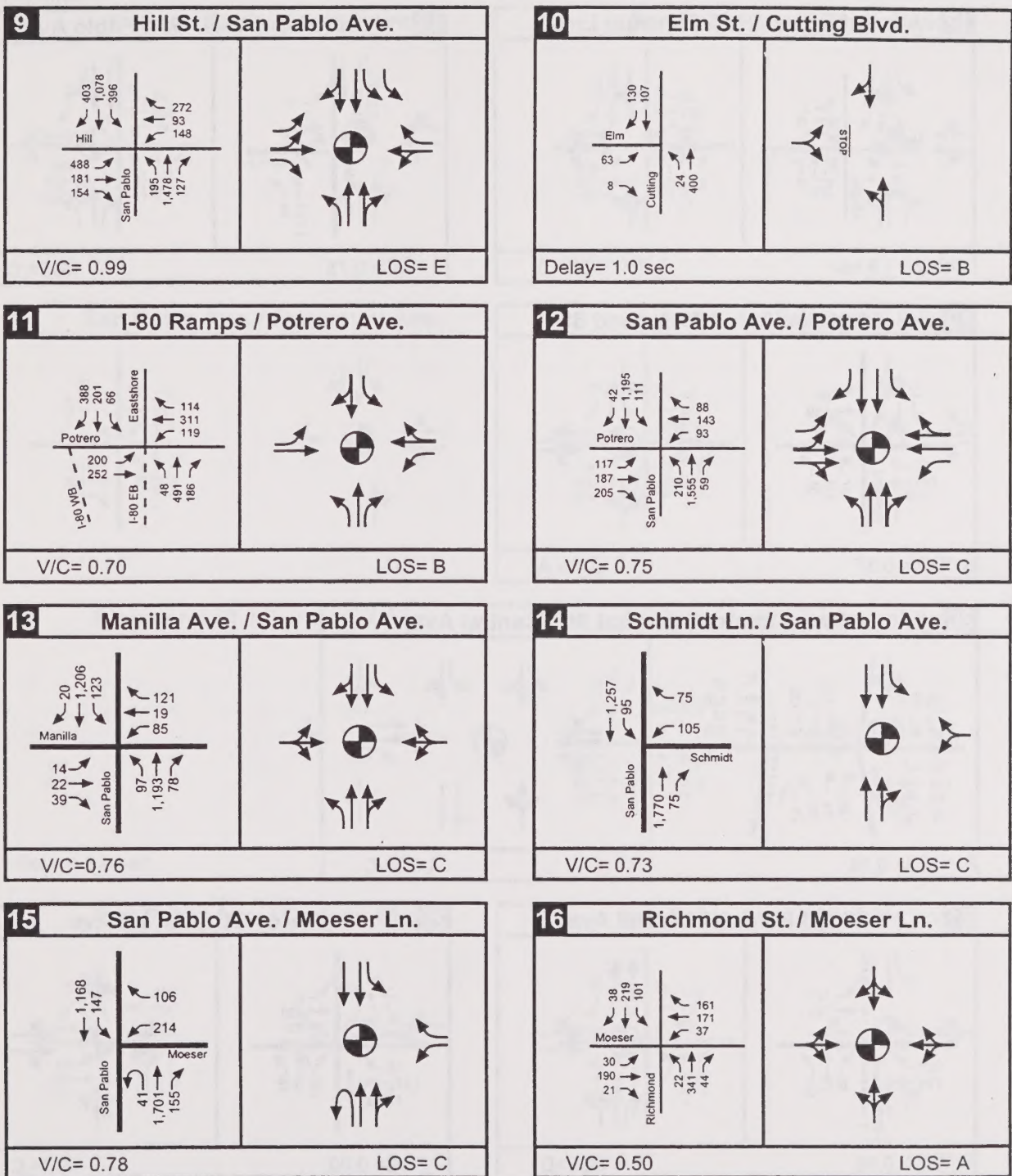
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 6A

1"=51'-71"-8

GENERAL PLAN BUILD-OUT
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



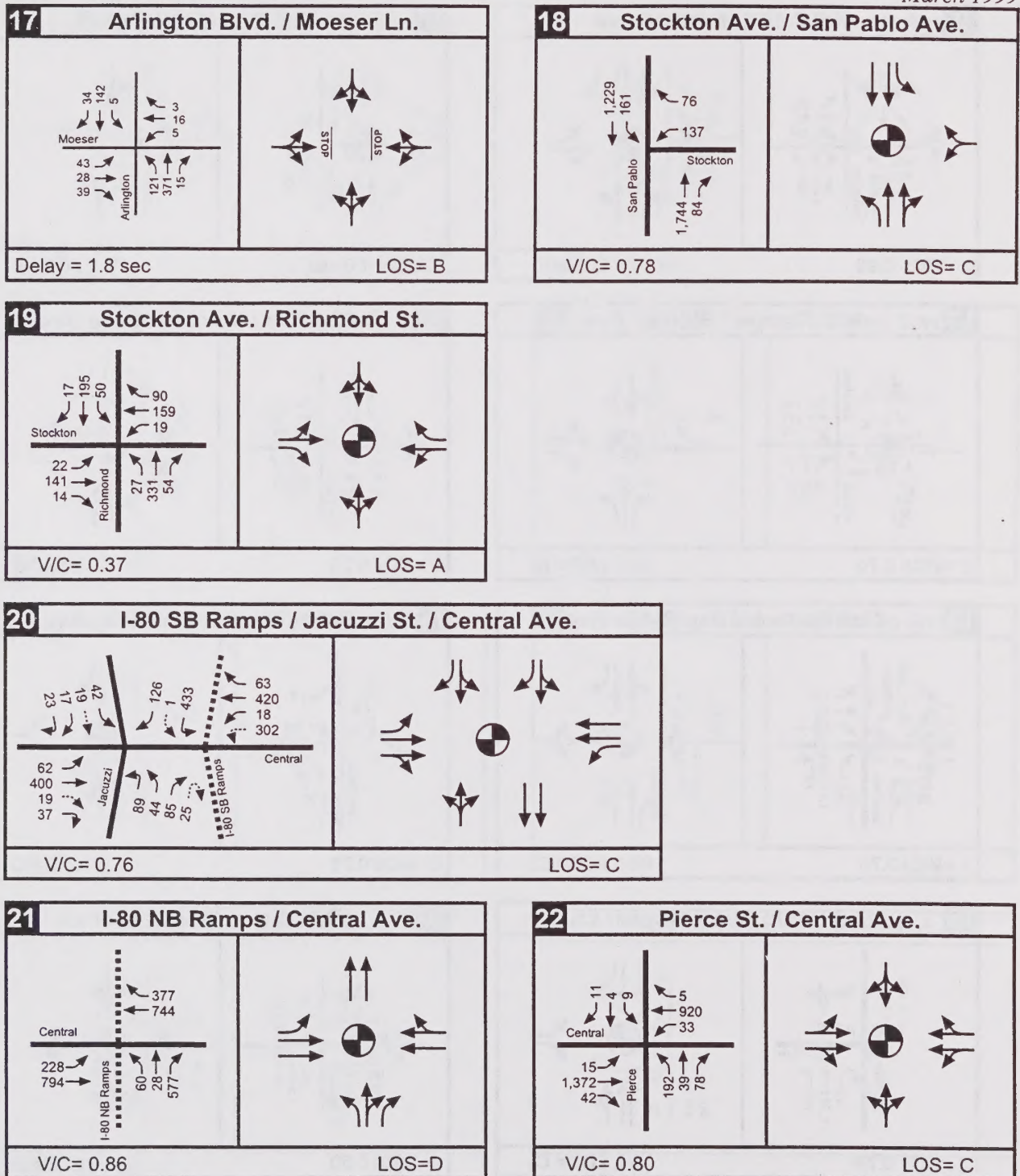
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 6B

1151-72-B

**GENERAL PLAN BUILD-OUT
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS**





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



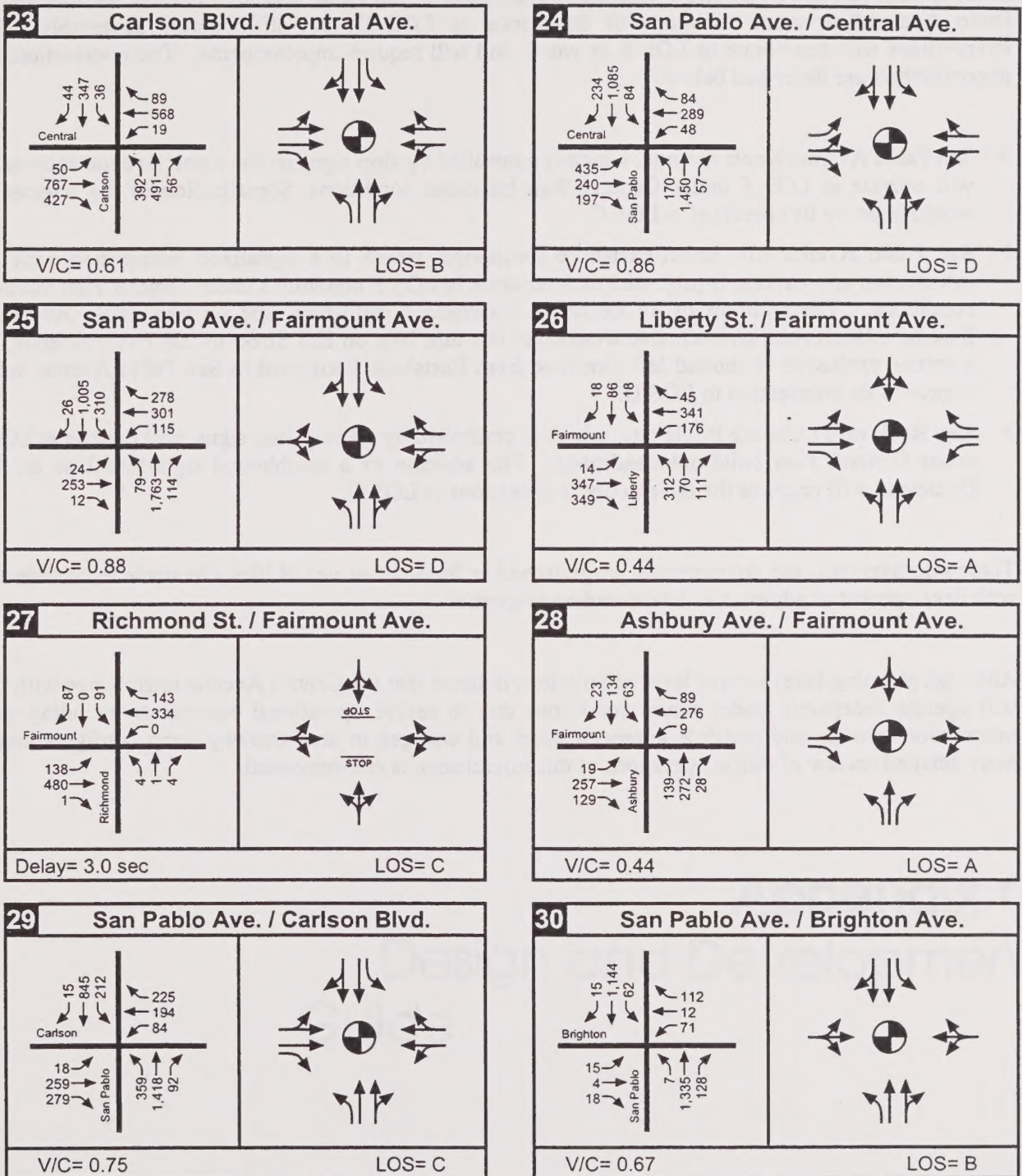
Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 6C

1151-73-B

**GENERAL PLAN BUILD-OUT
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS**





Key:



Traffic Signal



Stop Sign



Freeway Ramp and Ramp Volumes

Figure 6D

1151-74-B

GENERAL PLAN BUILD-OUT
INTERSECTION CONDITIONS



The projections indicate that most intersections in El Cerrito will continue to operate at LOS C or better in the future. Around El Cerrito Plaza, the intersections of San Pablo Avenue / Central Avenue and San Pablo Avenue/Fairmount Avenue will deteriorate to LOS D, but still operate acceptably. Three intersections will deteriorate to LOS E or worse and will require improvements. The intersections and improvements are described below:

- San Pablo Avenue/Knott Avenue, which is controlled by stop signs on the Knott Avenue approaches, will operate at LOS F under General Plan build-out conditions. Signalization of the intersection would improve its operation to LOS C.
- San Pablo Avenue Hill Street/Eastshore Boulevard, which is a signalized intersection with five intersection approaches, is projected to deteriorate to LOS E conditions under General Plan build-out conditions. The addition of an exclusive southbound right-turn lane on San Pablo Avenue to Eastshore Boulevard, an exclusive westbound left-turn lane on Hill Street to San Pablo Avenue, and a second exclusive eastbound left-turn lane from Eastshore Boulevard to San Pablo Avenue would improve this intersection to LOS D.
- Key Boulevard / Cutting Boulevard, which is controlled by all-way stop signs, will operate at LOS E under General Plan build-out conditions. The addition of a southbound right-turn lane on Key Boulevard will improve the intersection's operations to LOS C.

These improvements are not currently programmed or funded, but would likely be made in combination with development of adjacent and surrounding properties.

Although planning-level service level calculations indicate that the Central Avenue interchange with I-80 will operate acceptably under future conditions due to severe operational constraints including close intersection spacing and multiple approach lanes and changes in area freeway ramp configurations, a more detailed review of traffic operations at this interchange is recommended.

Appendix C

Design and Development Guide

APPENDIX C DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

The El Cerrito General Plan identifies three major business centers, a business corridor along San Pablo Avenue, and two neighborhood business districts, all of which need special design attention. The three major development centers include the Del Norte BART Station area, the Midtown Area, and the El Cerrito Plaza area. The San Pablo Avenue corridor also includes the adjoining, higher density residential areas to the east of San Pablo Avenue. The two neighborhood serving commercial centers include the shopping area on Fairmount at Colusa Avenue, and the shopping area on Stockton at Ashbury. This section describes each of these special areas and illustrates concepts for their future improvement.

The Design and Development Guide is intended for use in the development of future plans for these special areas. The guidelines provided here serve two primary purposes. The first is to ensure that new development in the City of El Cerrito, both private and public, is designed to fit within the overall urban design vision for the City. The realization of this vision will create a physical setting that attracts new businesses that ensure the long-term economic viability of the City. The second purpose is to ensure the successful integration of the various development areas in the City with adjoining residential neighborhoods, thereby mutually strengthening both the commercial centers and their surroundings.

The guidelines help convey to investors, property owners and developers, as well as to their designers, the overall design approach for the special development areas, and the level of quality that they will be expected to meet. In addition, the design guidelines provide the development community with the assurance that the type, design and quality of neighboring structures will be compatible and consistent with their development. The private builder also knows the plan and the quality of future public improvements, both in public buildings and in streetscape and open spaces.

Design improvement does not happen all at once. The community design process is an incremental process that occurs over time as each individual project is completed. It is a process of a series of individual actions by the City, private property owners, and developers over time. Thus, the Design and Development guide provides a means to coordinate these individual actions to achieve the City's vision for the overall community design.

The ideas and recommendations in this section are consistent with the stated goals and policies of the El Cerrito General Plan. The guidelines are intended as "general directions" for new development and revitalization of each special planning area. More specific planning and design guidelines and principles will be developed as an implementation tool for the City and in conjunction with the development of specific Area Plans for the major development areas – Del Norte, Midtown, El Cerrito Plaza, and San Pablo Avenue.

The City may use the design guidelines in any requests for development proposals for future development projects. In addition, the guidelines establish the general design and programmatic directions for the City's future investments in streets, public buildings, landscaping and parking, and thereby provide a basis for capital improvement programming efforts.

Design Details for Major Development Centers

The following design guidelines apply to the major development centers at the Del Norte BART Area, El Cerrito Plaza Area, and Midtown Area:

Design Details

- Streetscape improvements will provide enhanced pedestrian spaces along the major commercial frontages, including decorative sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches and other pedestrian amenities.
- Buildings adjacent to pedestrian routes, San Pablo Avenue, Kearny Street (Midtown Area), and the Ohlone Greenway, should be sited and designed to produce well-defined pedestrian spaces on a human scale. Building facades should provide windows, doorways, entries, outdoor patios and recreation spaces opening onto the greenway with appropriate lighting to increase safety and activity along the trail.
- Building design and character should allow for a diversity of styles integrated with the use of common design elements. Common design elements include use of common building materials; consistent landscaping and streetscape components; application of general rules insuring consistency in the heights, bulk, and siting of individual buildings; creation of continuous street frontage at the back of sidewalks; and use of storefront windows, awnings, and entries along commercial streets.
- Use of building materials can vary according to the building height and scale. In order to create a more human scale at the street level, commercial buildings should use brick, masonry, granite, decorative concrete, or marble on the ground floor levels to help accentuate the pedestrian oriented commercial frontages.
- Building design should avoid the use of large expanses of glass, mirrored glass, and undifferentiated steel and concrete facades. Windows, doorways, and entries, balconies and overhangs can be used as architectural elements to create greater variety and a more human scale in building facades.
- Building materials consistent with a more urban place are encouraged such as brick, granite, concrete, marble, tiles, and decorative block.
- Buildings should avoid featureless, monumental, large scale massing with unarticulated building surfaces. Buildings should be designed to suggest a more ornamented building facade. The landscape of the area should be scaled to the person, not the car, suggesting a more intimate urban character.
- Corner sites provide opportunities for landmark building elements to be incorporated into the building design and site layout. Landmark elements may include towers, unique roof shapes, unique façade treatments, and taller buildings at the corners and at major building entries that help to visually identify the area from San Pablo Avenue.
- Building signage should adequately convey directional information needed by motorists and pedestrians, provide sufficient business identification, and reflect the character and scale of pedestrian areas. Large outdoor advertising signs should not be permitted.
- All outdoor storage areas should be located away from major pedestrian streets and screen from view with decorative fencing and landscaping.

Del Norte BART Area

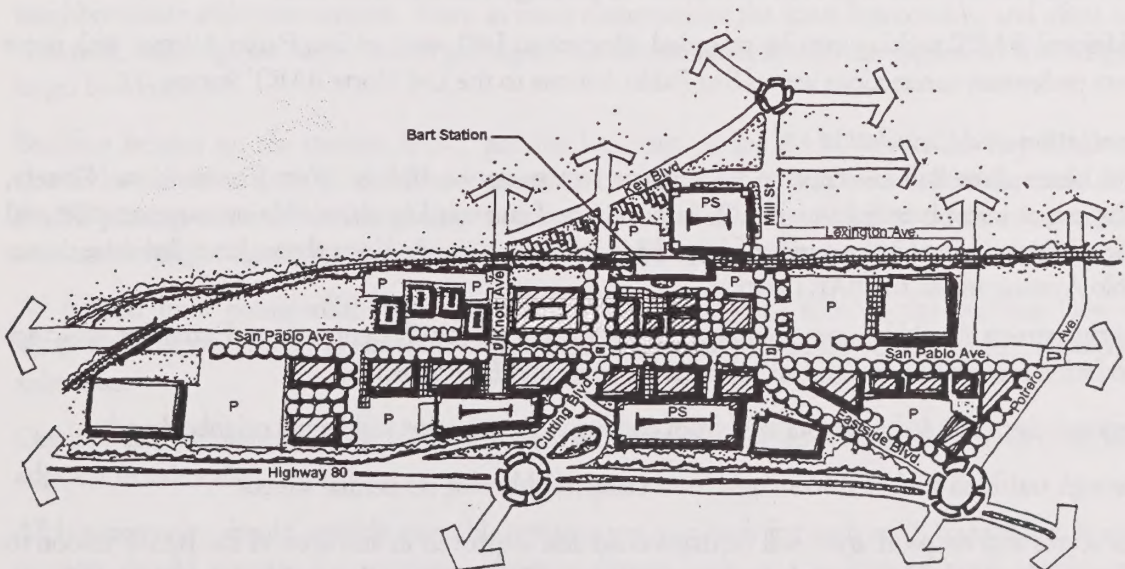
The Del Norte BART area is a major transportation hub, with links to BART and its commuter parking lot, the Interstate 80 and I-580 interchanges, and San Pablo Avenue. Recent improvements along I-80 and I-580 provide direct access to the area and the BART parking lots from freeway HOV lanes and an exclusive freeway off ramp. The confluence of these major transportation systems has impacted the congested San Pablo Avenue and local residential neighborhoods. While traffic congestion is a major issue, the area's strategic location also provides a great opportunity for future development of the site.

The Del Norte BART station area contains a mix of newer, community and regional-serving, retail facilities, and a number of underutilized and vacant sites. In addition, the area contains a new mixed-use retail and housing complex, Del Norte Plaza, near the BART station.

Future Development Concept

While it will continue to be a challenge to facilitate the movement of people across San Pablo Avenue, the Del Norte area has the potential to take advantage of its significant regional role as a major transportation hub in West Contra Costa County. The Del Norte Area is envisioned as a major concentrated regional, mixed-use center for regional offices, commercial, and residential uses, taking advantage of its proximity to the BART station and I-80. Future uses are envisioned to evolve over time from big-box, auto oriented retail uses to more intense, mixed-use office and specialty commercial uses.

The area will be designed to be more pedestrian friendly, with stronger pedestrian connections to the BART station. An outdoor public plaza or gathering place surrounded by ground floor retail uses, cafes and restaurants will provide an inviting and active place for local residents and office workers in the area.



Design Guidelines

The design guidelines presented below are based in part on the assumption that at some future time, development will take place on all or portions of BART's surface parking lots (if alternate parking arrangements are made, or if the demand for BART parking is reduced).

Land Use and Site Organization

- The future development should consist of a concentration of mixed uses, including regional, high-tech offices and retail uses, and residential development oriented to take advantage of the area's proximity to the Del Norte BART station.
- Major mixed-use office developments will be concentrated along San Pablo Avenue, including offices for major high-tech office employers, smaller entrepreneurial businesses, professionals, and banks and financial service industries.
- Retail uses that provide services and goods for offices and local residents should be provided on the ground floor of new projects, opening onto wide pedestrian friendly sidewalks, public spaces, and plazas.
- Residential uses are allowed on upper levels of mixed-use projects on the east side of San Pablo Avenue. Residential uses east of San Pablo Avenue (to the BART tracks) should be allowed at a density of up to 45 dwelling units/acre, with ground-floor retail activity and active pedestrian friendly streets, sidewalks, and plaza spaces.
- Residential uses could be developed on the existing surface BART parking lots east of the BART tracks with medium density housing and designed in keeping with the scale and character of adjacent residential uses.
- Higher intensity commercial development (offices and retail uses) is envisioned on the west side of San Pablo Avenue with improved auto access to parking structures from I-80.
- Additional BART parking may be provided adjacent to I-80, west of San Pablo Avenue with more direct pedestrian connections across San Pablo Avenue to the Del Norte BART Station.

Transportation and Circulation

The Del Norte Area will continue to be a major transportation hub in West Contra Costa County, providing major commuter links to BART from I-80 and surrounding cities. Major transportation and circulation improvements will consist of improving pedestrian connections throughout the area, across San Pablo Avenue and to the BART station.

- Existing streets should be improved as necessary to provide for efficient, safe and attractive vehicular circulation around the area and access to major users and BART parking.
- Regional users should be discouraged from parking in neighboring residential neighborhoods.
- Through traffic should be discouraged from using neighboring residential streets.
- Bus access and drop-off areas will be maintained and improved in and around the BART station to enhance the pedestrian connections to surrounding developments and across San Pablo Avenue.
- If financially feasible, a grade-separated pedestrian crossing (bridge or tunnel) should be provided across San Pablo Avenue at Cutting Boulevard.

- In higher intensity developments, parking shall be provided in parking structures either above or below grade level. Ground floor levels of parking structures should provide for retail uses adjacent to commercial streets – San Pablo Avenue, Cutting Boulevard, Hill Street and Potrero Avenue.
- Surface parking should be located to the side and rear of development sites to maintain a continuous building face along San Pablo Avenue.
- Within the Del Norte BART area, pedestrian access to and from the BART station and surrounding development should be clearly marked with graphically emphatic crosswalk markings (such as zebra stripes, special textures, or paving treatments) and unobstructed sidewalks.

Landscaping and Open Space

- Trees along commercial streets should be carefully selected to help give distinctive character to the commercial area, to provide shade along the sidewalks, and to have an open growth pattern that avoids the hiding of storefronts and signs.
- A plaza or gathering place should be provided at the center of the area adjacent to the BART Station.
- Pedestrian improvements will provide greater access to the Ohlone Greenway from new projects along San Pablo Avenue.
- All pedestrian spaces should be well designed with shade trees and other pedestrian amenities including benches, trash cans, public art, water features, lighting, and other streetscape elements.

Building Design

- Building heights should allow for higher intensity development in keeping with the higher development costs at transit nodes. Higher structures may also be permitted for landmark towers, steeples, and other architectural building elements that would help create more character and identity to a given project. In all cases, extraordinary heights must be balanced with their impacts on local neighborhoods and communities. Since in most communities the most memorable, and often most criticized, buildings are larger buildings, higher visual standards should be applied to the design of larger buildings.
- Building heights on the current BART parking lots, east of the BART tracks on Key Boulevard, should be limited to three stories. The appropriate development pattern would allow for reuse of the BART parking areas as medium density residential uses, such as townhouses, duplexes or small-lot residential designs consistent in design with the surrounding lower density residential neighborhoods.
- All ground floor commercial spaces should provide a minimum 60% of the building face with windows, window display areas, entries and other forms of pedestrian activity spaces adjacent to sidewalks.
- Outdoor sidewalk sales, seating, restaurants, and cafes are encouraged on all ground floor retail levels adjacent to sidewalks.
- All housing units should provide a useable outdoor patio or deck for each unit. In addition, housing projects should provide for common recreational uses such as a swimming pool, tennis court, workout gym, sauna, etc. for the use of the project's residences.

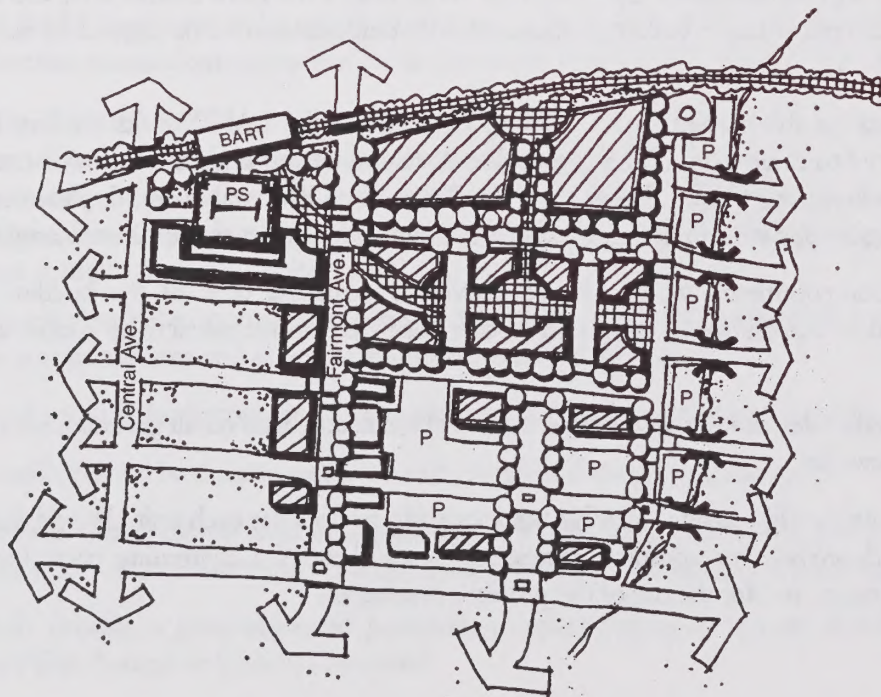
El Cerrito Plaza Area

El Cerrito Plaza is a commercial center in transition. Currently the Plaza is an aging suburban mall, with large open parking lots, vacant retail space, a major grocery store and a drug store. The old mall no longer fits today's marketing strategies and is considered to be too far from I-80 to function as a large regional shopping center. The land use mix and site organization of the Plaza will most likely undergo a number of changes in the years to come. Over time, the major function of the Plaza will shift as market demands and economic development opportunities continue to grow.

Although the Plaza may no longer be viable as a regional "mall," the area has great potential for reuse and redevelopment in part because of its proximity to the Plaza BART station. The site is strategically located to serve a large segment of the East Bay. In the future, the Plaza could take advantage of its location in El Cerrito and adjacent communities as a mixed-use, transit-oriented village.

Future Development Concept

The Plaza is envisioned as a future mixed-use, commercial town center with higher-end retail establishments, restaurants, and office space. The Plaza could continue to provide for community needs with an enlarged major grocery chain, drug store and medium sized department store. In addition, the Plaza area may accommodate additional office uses and upper floor residential uses. Cerrito Creek should be restored with a more generous riparian zone and additional segments opened up where possible, providing more park space, a healthy riparian habitat, and pedestrian and bicycle trails connecting to the Ohlone Greenway. The site should be organized as a pedestrian friendly town center, with new pedestrian friendly streets with wide, tree-shaded sidewalks that have distinctive paving surfaces, seating areas, and other amenities. Street connections should be extended through to adjoining neighborhoods, the El Cerrito BART, Station and San Pablo Avenue. New buildings should be oriented around a new major public gathering place. This new public square, green, or plaza would be flanked with active retail spaces, cafes, restaurants, and outdoor eating.



Design Guidelines

Land Use and Site Organization

- The Plaza is intended to provide for a range of local and regional commercial uses that could include a major grocery store, a drug store, a department store, specialty retail outlets and boutiques, cafes, restaurants, offices and residential units above ground floor retail uses.
- The Plaza area is envisioned as a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use town center, with ground floor retail uses and upper levels of office and residential uses.
- The Plaza should provide for a major outdoor public gathering place, square, plaza or green at the center of the commercial uses. The public gathering place should provide for active uses opening onto the public space such as outdoor eating, cafes, sidewalk sales and specialty events that encourage active use during the day and evening hours.
- Buildings should be formed around the public space to create an “outdoor room” that creates a sense of enclosure around the plaza. The public space should also provide direct access to at least one commercial street in the Plaza area to allow views onto and from the street.
- Activities, entries, public outdoor spaces, patios, and windows should open onto the Ohlone Greenway to improve the safety and security of the area and to provide for increased activity on the greenway.
- Buildings should be located fronting directly on to Fairmount and San Pablo Avenues.
- Mixed-use development of the BART parking lots west of the BART station is encouraged. Development should be linked functionally and visually to the commercial Plaza area across Fairmount Avenue, and should be designed as an attractive gateway into El Cerrito for people exiting from the BART turnstiles.
- Residential use of the BART parking lots would be permitted east of the BART station.
- Development of the BART stations assumes BART parking would be integrated into the overall development in new parking structures or in below grade parking lots.

Transportation and Circulation

- The Plaza Town Center area could be redeveloped with a new urban street pattern by extending the existing street grid connecting through the site to adjoining areas to the south and San Pablo Avenue.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections should be provided to the surrounding neighborhoods, the BART Station, the Ohlone Greenway, and to San Pablo Avenue.
- Parking should be provided in smaller parking courts located behind commercial buildings and away from Fairmount and San Pablo Avenues.
- Parking structures can also be used to meet parking requirements of higher intensity development. Parking structures should include ground floor commercial activity opening onto major pedestrian oriented streets.

Landscaping and Open Space

- Landscaping in the Plaza area should create a continuous, safe and connected system of pedestrian friendly, urban streetscapes with wide sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian amenities (benches, lighting, water fountains, public art, signs, information kiosks, etc.).
- The Plaza area should be designed to provide a large plaza or public gathering place in the center of the commercial area with pedestrian amenities to create an active and comfortable outdoor public space. Pedestrian amenities on the plaza should include public art, trees, lighting, a water fountain, benches and a variety of seating, with food and other activities that open onto the space.
- Where possible, the Cerrito Creek should be opened up to create a recreational and open space amenity for the area with trails and bike paths connecting from San Pablo Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood to the Ohlone Greenway and the commercial center.

Building Design

- New buildings should be located directly behind the sidewalk of all major streets, to create a continuous and connected building face along major pedestrian ways.
- Buildings should provide a continuous open frontage to the street with display areas, windows, entries and other pedestrian oriented activities at the ground floor. Open areas allow for views in and out of buildings along the streets and should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor building frontages.
- Buildings in the Plaza area should be designed with a distinctive architectural character and create a consistent and unified theme or image using similar building materials, building scale, buildings style, and other building design elements and details that tie the Plaza together as one unified whole.

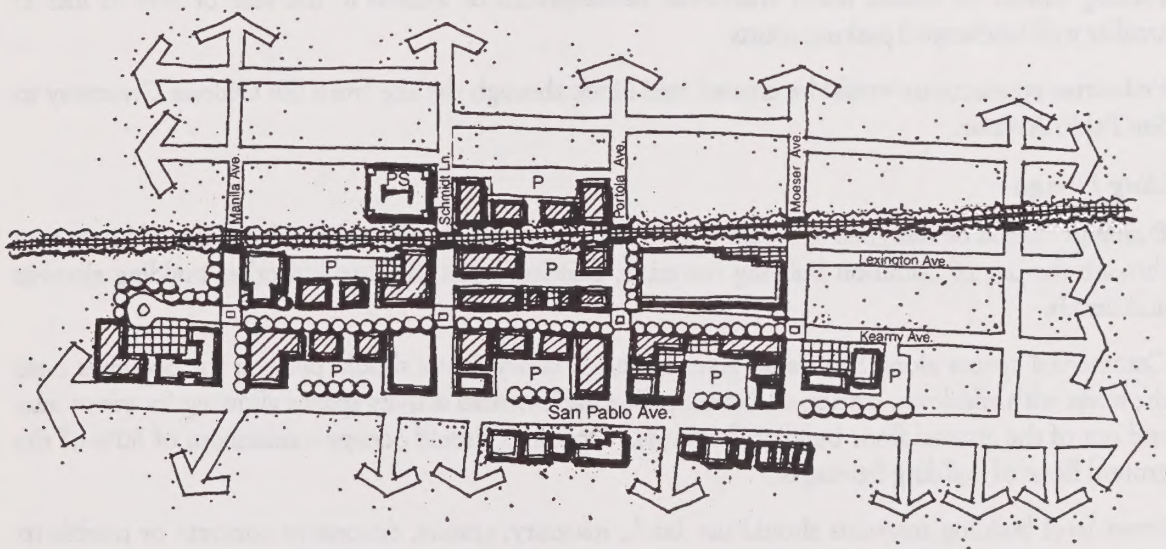
Midtown Area

Midtown City Center area is located in the center of El Cerrito along San Pablo Avenue. It stretches from south of Moeser to north of Manila Avenue along the east side of San Pablo Avenue to the BART tracks.

The existing land use pattern consists principally of two older community shopping centers (grocery stores and a drug store), a lumber mill, City Hall and the Public Safety Building. The shopping centers are characteristic of suburban, auto-oriented strip commercial centers with large surface parking lots along the street frontage, few trees, and buildings set back deep in the lots. The area also contains a number of vacant and underutilized sites.

Future Development Concept

Modern retailing trends could make these retail centers obsolete in the near future, leaving these sites potentially available for redevelopment to higher and better uses. The Midtown area should be planned and developed through the adoption of a Specific Plan for the area. The Specific Plan should outline a detailed land use, site development and circulation patterns, and implementation strategy for the area.



Design Guidelines

Land Use and Site Organization

- The Midtown City Center area would allow for a mixed use, pedestrian friendly town center design with ground-floor retail uses and higher density housing and office uses above.
- The mixed-use center should be designed around a new pedestrian-oriented, "slow street" as an extension of Kearney Street through the site connecting from Moeser to Manila Avenue.
- An expanded civic center, including a new City Hall, the existing Public Safety Building, and possibly other civic activities, would be clustered at the north end of the area adjacent to the existing Public

Safety Building. The civic function should include building entries and activities opening onto a public gathering place, plaza, or “green”.

- Future redevelopment of the lumberyard would permit mixed-use development with higher density housing and office space above ground floor retail uses. The lumberyard sites east of the BART tracks would permit medium density housing compatible with the scale, height, and character of the adjoining residential neighborhood.
- Buildings should be designed with entries, plazas, courtyards, and activity areas opening onto the Ohlone Greenway, allowing for greater visual surveillance of activities along the trail.

Circulation, Access and Parking

- The Midtown concept envisions extending Kearny Street south from Schmidt to Moeser Lane through the existing shopping center parking lots. Kearny would be revitalized as a major pedestrian oriented, commercial street.
- Kearney Street would become the main street through the Midtown blocks with wide pedestrian oriented sidewalks, buildings close to the street, and parking placed in structures or behind or to the side of new commercial stores.
- Parking should be tucked under mixed-use development or located to the rear or side of lots in smaller well-landscaped parking courts.
- Pedestrian connections would be created mid-block through the site from the Ohlone Greenway to San Pablo Avenue.

Building Design

- Buildings should be designed to create a common image and character throughout the Midtown area through the use of common building materials, building styles, heights and other building element and details.
- Commercial spaces along San Pablo Avenue and Kearney Street should provide for openings onto the street with windows, entries, and other pedestrian oriented activity spaces allowing for views into and out of the ground floor building frontages. Openings should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor of building frontages.
- Street level building materials should use brick, masonry, granite, decorative concrete or marble to help accentuate the pedestrian oriented commercial frontages and creates a more human scale.
- Building frontages should incorporate awnings, arcade and other architectural devises that impart a sense of visual unity to the area and provide weather protection and sun shading for pedestrian shoppers.
- Buildings east of the BART tracks should reduce heights by stepping down the building form in scale with adjoining residential uses.
- Building design and character should allow for a diversity of styles integrated with use of common design elements or building styles. Common design elements include use of common building materials; consistent landscaping and streetscape components; application of general rules insuring consistency in the heights, bulk, and siting of individual buildings; creation of continuous street

frontage at the back of sidewalks; and use of storefront windows, awnings, and entries along commercial streets.

- Building design should avoid the use of large expanses of glass, mirrored glass, and undifferentiated steel and concrete facades. Windows, doorways, and entries, balconies and overhangs can be used as architectural elements to create greater variety and a more human scale in building facades.
- Buildings in the Midtown Area should avoid a monumental look and instead, suggest a more subtle urban character. Buildings should be of human scale in keeping with the residential context of El Cerrito.

Landscaping

- Landscaping elements along the Kearney Street should create a strong, pedestrian friendly urban character with wide sidewalks, canopy street trees, and pedestrian amenities such as seating, public art, water features, lighting, and other street furniture.
- A public outdoor gathering place should be provided in the Midtown area adjacent to Kearny Street. This outdoor space should be designed as a plaza or town square with pedestrian amenities and retail stores, cafes and restaurants opening onto the public space.

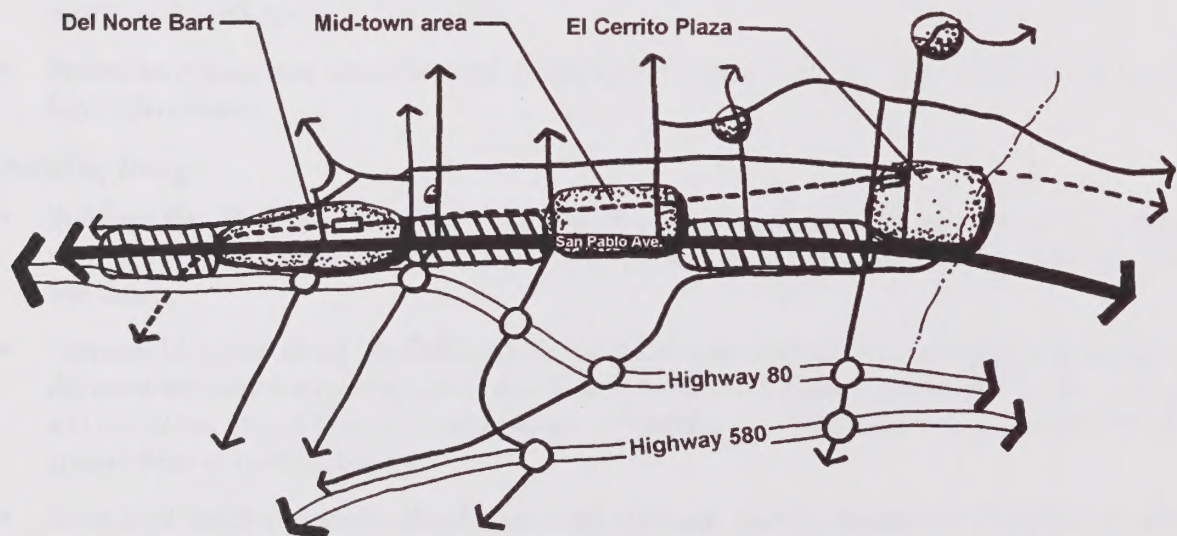


San Pablo Avenue Corridor

San Pablo Avenue is currently characteristic of an older suburban commercial strip. Although sufficient for smaller retail establishments, many of the commercial lots along San Pablo Avenue lack sufficient size or parking space to accommodate modern retail development. Many of the existing older buildings are too small, antiquated, or vacant. However, it is expected that San Pablo Avenue will continue to play a role as a major retail corridor as new developments slowly consolidate smaller lots and replace old buildings.

Future Development Concept

The El Cerrito General Plan envisions creating opportunities for consolidating smaller lots and sites, and rehabilitating older sites for new office, retail and residential uses. Where appropriate, commercial and mixed-use development will expand through to adjoining streets in the rear of the San Pablo frontages. Mixed use and higher density housing can reflect and compliment the surrounding neighborhoods through appropriate site design, building orientation, use of materials, detailing, landscaping, and site amenities. Mixed-use development has the additional benefit of creating opportunities for shared parking, thus reducing the total amount of necessary surface parking.



Design Guidelines

Land Use and Site Organization

- The land use pattern along San Pablo Avenue would permit a mix of uses including retail stores, offices and mixed-use residential developments. The depth of the mixed-use commercial uses would allow for new development to extend two lots deep, east to the adjoining residential streets.
- Pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development is encouraged to extend as fingers from San Pablo Avenue along major cross-street east to the BART tracks and the Ohlone Greenway including Moeser Lane, Fairmount, Manila and Stockton Avenues. The pattern of development should be

designed to complement existing surrounding neighborhoods and provide ground floor retail uses, with upper floor office and residential uses.

- New development should be designed with active pedestrian spaces opening onto the Ohlone Greenway with entries, windows, and outdoor activity areas with views into and out of the ground-floor spaces.

Circulation, Access and Parking

- Parking and residential uses would be allowed to extend the full depth of the blocks. However, the rear of commercial buildings and commercial delivery areas should not open on to the back streets. All parking lots extending through to back streets should be heavily landscaped, well lighted, and screened from adjoining residential neighbors.
- Pedestrian friendly street improvements will contribute to the character and safety of these activity centers. These street improvements could include street trees, special lighting, decorative pedestrian walkways, and pedestrian amenities and furniture, such as seating, trashcans, fountains, phone booths, directional signs, entry landmarks, banners, and landscaping.
- New development along San Pablo should provide easy and prominent access from the street for convenience of bus patrons.

Building Design

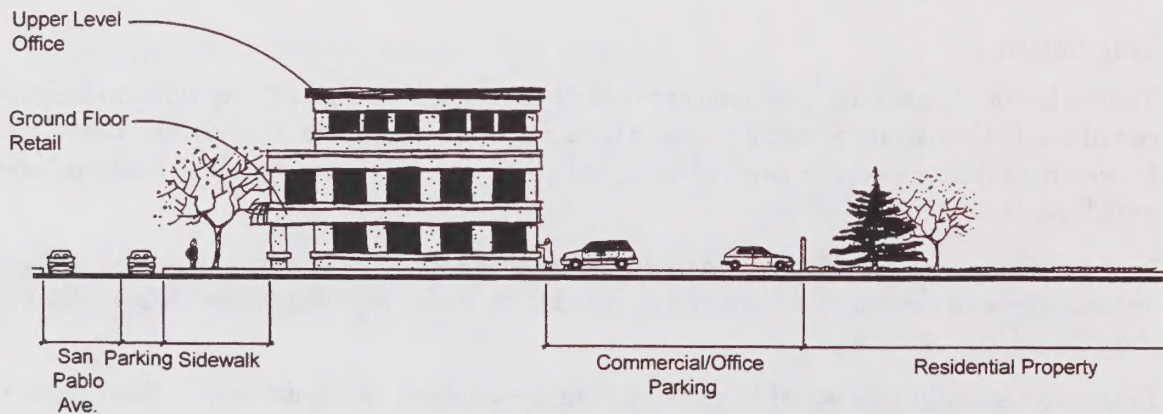
- The site layout of mixed-use development would permit residential heights to step down to the street east of San Pablo Avenue, to create a smooth transition to the adjacent lower density residential area. Entries to residences would be required from the back streets. Auto access to these residential units would also be permitted.
- New development should be designed to open onto pedestrian ways and provide entries, windows and activities with views into and out of the ground-floor spaces, especially where such development abuts the Ohlone Greenway.
- Entries to residential uses would be required from the adjoining residential streets. Auto access to residential parking would also be permitted from residential streets.
- Commercial sites should locate buildings behind the sidewalks along San Pablo Avenue to help create a continuous commercial building frontage along San Pablo Avenue.

Landscaping

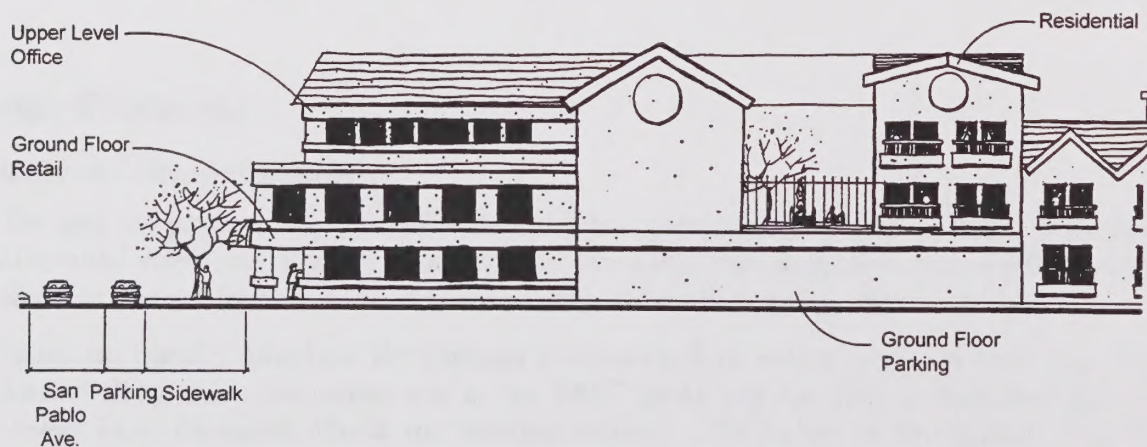
- San Pablo Avenue should be designed with a continuous urban streetscape character, with buildings placed at the back of wide pedestrian oriented sidewalks, with large canopy street trees, pedestrian scale lighting and street furniture.
- The residential streets should be designed with a residential character with front yard setbacks similar to adjoining residential lots, street trees, and residential building entries and windows facing onto the street.
- Where parking lots serving abutting commercial activities are permitted within multi-family residential districts, parking areas should be screened from adjoining residential uses with appropriate setbacks, decorative fencing, berms and landscaping materials (shrubs, trees and ground cover).

San Pablo Avenue Corridor Development Concepts

Commercial Use Option

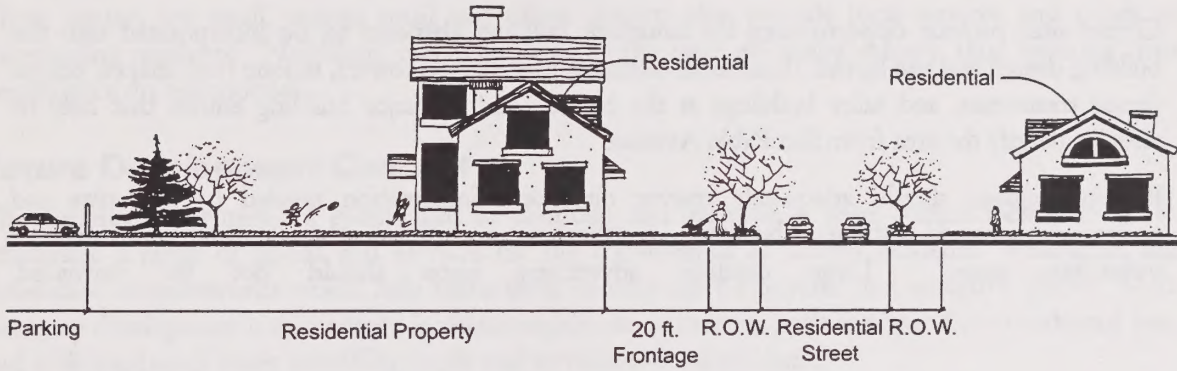


Mixed-Use Option

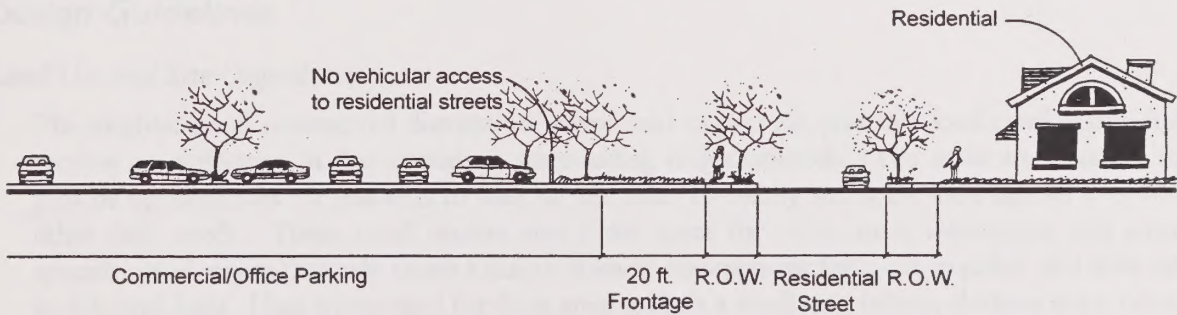


San Pablo Avenue Corridor – Adjoining Residential Treatment

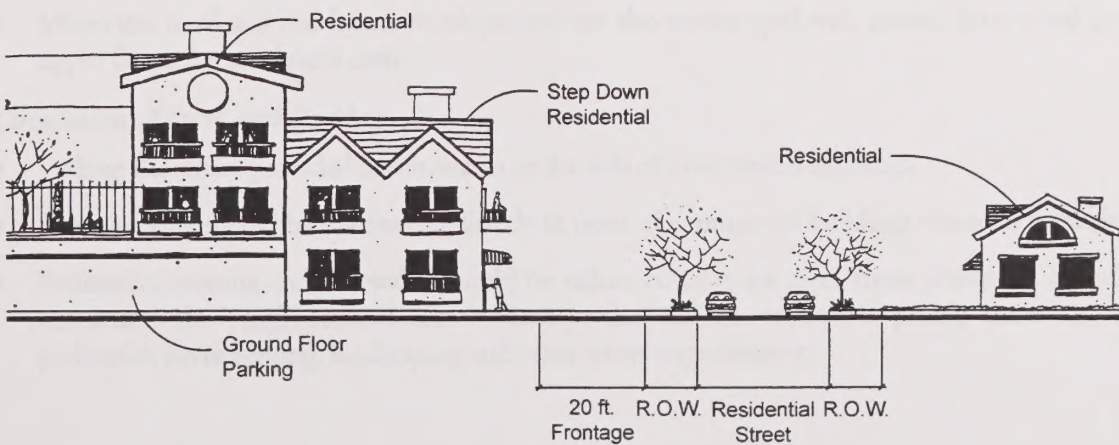
Residential Option



Commercial Parking Option



Mixed-Use Option



Design Details

- Commercial lighting and parking lot lighting should not shine onto adjoining private outdoor spaces and yards of adjoining residences.
- Signs on residential streets should be limited to building identification signs, directional signs, and unit numbering signs. Commercial signage should not face adjoining residential areas.
- Corner sites provide opportunities for landmark building elements to be incorporated into the building design and site layout. Landmark elements may include towers, unique roof shapes, unique façade treatments, and taller buildings at the corners and at major building entries that help to visually identify the area from San Pablo Avenue.
- Building signage should adequately convey directional information needed by motorists and pedestrians, provide sufficient business identification, and reflect the character and scale of pedestrian areas. Large outdoor advertising signs should not be permitted.

Neighborhood Commercial Districts

Two neighborhood commercial districts are located in El Cerrito. One center is on Fairmount Avenue between Colusa and Ramona Avenues. The second center is on Stockton between Ashbury Avenue and Everett Street. A third small retail store, a food market, is located on Potrero Avenue and Liberty Street. These centers are small, unique retail and office districts that provide local services and goods to surrounding residents. Neighbors can easily walk to the retail shopping centers, thus reducing their dependence on automobiles.

Future Development Concept

The commercial centers are encouraged to continue and improve at their current locations and to emphasize a range of goods and services for the convenience of nearby residents. Pedestrian and streetscape improvements would help make these centers more enjoyable and attractive places. More intensive development is encouraged in these neighborhood centers, such as upper-floor residential uses, and additional retail stores providing goods and services to local residents.

Additional small neighborhood retail centers may be permitted in residential areas provided the use does not create undue traffic congestion or otherwise overburden neighborhoods.

Design Guidelines

Land Use and Site Organization

- The neighborhood commercial districts are envisioned to provide primarily local retail goods and services to residences in the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. The areas are intended to provide opportunities for residents to walk or ride bikes to nearby stores for food and services and other daily needs. These small centers also allow space for cafes, small restaurants, and other specialty retail outlets that help create a unique friendly environment for locals to gather and meet on an informal basis. Uses encouraged for these areas include a small pub, bakery, clothing store, tailor, barber and hair salon, and a small conveyance grocery store.
- These small centers would also allow for small office uses such as realtors, professional offices, and small banks, either on the ground floor or on upper floor of mixed-use buildings.
- Mixed-use retail and residential developments are also encouraged with ground floor retail uses and upper floors for residential units.

Circulation, Access and Parking

- Parking should be provided in the rear or to the side of commercial buildings.
- Street parking should be maintained directly in front of commercial buildings wherever possible.
- Pedestrian crossing and sidewalks should be enhanced to make them more pedestrian friendly and accentuate the neighborhood center through the use of decorative paving materials, special pedestrian street lighting, landscaping and other streetscape elements.

Building Design

- Buildings in the neighborhood commercial areas should be designed in a scale and character compatible with surrounding residential areas.
- Buildings should be located at the back of sidewalks in the neighborhood commercial centers with building openings facing onto the sidewalks.
- Building openings, windows, entryways, and other pedestrian oriented activities should occupy a minimum of 60% of the ground floor building frontage.
- Buildings should avoid use of modern styles with large expanses of glass, steel, and concrete. Buildings should use materials typical of historic commercial frontages using brick, stone, masonry, wood, and tiles.

Landscaping

- Landscaping in the neighborhood commercial centers consist of streetscape improvements to help strengthen the pedestrian scale and character of the street. Streetscape improvements are intended to enhance the pedestrian experience with street trees, seating, water features, public art, decorative trashcans, water fountains and other amenities.
- Pedestrian street furniture of each neighborhood center should be designed with their own distinctive character to help distinguish one center from the other and to give each area its own unique identity.

Design Details

- Each neighborhood commercial area should establish its own, unique design character with pedestrian amenities, street furniture, public art and a district sign or landmark feature.
- Signage should be in scale and character with the neighborhood commercial function. Signage should be integrated into and fixed to buildings. Monument signs or pole signs should not be used.

Appendix D

Summary of Issues

APPENDIX D SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED AND ADDRESSED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Public Participation Input

A number of concerns and potential opportunities were raised during the public participation process of the General Plan update process, especially during the second round of community workshops. The main themes from the public input were as follows:

- Minimal changes are desired in single-family areas – desired improvements are operational in nature.
- Support exists for more neighborhood-oriented retail, both on San Pablo Ave and in established neighborhood centers.
- Changes are desired in non-residential areas to support these objectives:
 - Economic vitality leading to fiscal health for the City
 - Improved image and visual quality
 - High-quality commercial activities; large chain stores only if high quality image
 - Increased employment base, especially small offices and high-tech activities
 - Creation of a strong sense of a “downtown” where the community can come together.
- Transportation objectives should be to:
 - Enhance pedestrian experience and safety
 - Reduce congestion on major streets and avoid cut-through traffic
 - Enhance transit and encourage bike usage
- Parks and creeks should be protected and restored.
- Public facilities should be improved.
- A cautious approach should be taken to multi-family housing. Senior housing is acceptable, moderate-income housing may be acceptable—the most acceptable areas are along Greenway and near BART stations. Mixed-use development is also acceptable in these areas.

Planning Commission Comments

The Planning Commission added two additional concerns:

- Residents of single-family areas near the San Pablo Avenue corridor are concerned about overspill of traffic and parking associated with higher use intensities nearby.

- Homeowners in areas containing a mixture of single and multiple-family housing tend to oppose additional apartments in their areas.

Guidance from City Council and Planning Commission

A number of comments were made at a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission—these are summarized below:

Overall Approach

- The primary emphasis of the General Plan should be on improving the quality of development.
- The General Plan needs to be flexible—emphasis should be on impacts of development rather than specifying exact types of development.
- The General Plan needs to be more user friendly and more implementation oriented than the current Plan.
- The General Plan needs to set evaluation criteria for, and limits on, development incentives.

Residential Development

- Existing single-family residential areas should remain primarily single family with “in-law” units allowed; other types of residential development may be allowed in selected areas, especially near open spaces and parks, provided it is a planned development that addresses quality of life issues such as air circulation, light, traffic, open space, noise, views, parking, and design quality.
- Residential intensification in existing multifamily areas should be limited; current delineations allowing intensification should be reviewed. New development should address quality of life issues such as air circulation, light, traffic, open space, noise, views, parking, and design quality. New development should support, not detract from, a sense of community. Where applicable, development should acknowledge and provide access to the Ohlone Greenway.
- Residential development density along San Pablo Avenue should be allowed up to 35 du/acre as part of encouraging and serving enlarged commercial and retail sectors. Density may be allowed up to 45 du/acre near BART stations through a bonus program that involves discretionary review. Mixed-use residential (residential over retail or other uses) and other housing products, such as live-work units, are encouraged. Individual buildings should not look like large boxes. Residential units should offer an interesting appearance from the street and, where applicable, the Ohlone Greenway, provide adequate structured parking, provide usable patios and open spaces, incorporate gathering places, and accommodate adequate service access.

Retail, Office and Civic Development

- Retail and office, including R&D facilities, should be of a size to be economically viable, but should not be out of scale with existing development and community expectations.

- Public buildings should be grouped together to provide an identifiable civic center.
- Public gathering places are important.

General Guidance

- Preserve buildings with historic significance.
- Restore selected creeks.
- Preserve and encourage planting of trees in appropriate places.
- Consider incentives for childcare, community rooms, reduced parking near BART, affordable housing, and pedestrian-friendly environments.
- Encourage mixed-use nodes along San Pablo Avenue at certain cross streets such as Fairmont, Stockton, and Moeser.
- Encourage fingers of pedestrian-oriented development on selected streets perpendicular to San Pablo Avenue, such as Fairmont, Stockton, and Moeser, with emphasis on the area between San Pablo Avenue and the Ohlone Greenway.
- Place more emphasis on making the city more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- Maintain and, as needed, upgrade quality of existing housing stock.

Consolidation of Major Themes

The inputs summarized above—from the public, Planning Commission, and City Council—plus the lessons learned from the 1975 General Plan provided complimentary and, often, similar guidance. All of these, plus the many other public comments and relevant policies in the 1975 General Plan, formed the basis for the General Plan update. As a result of all of this input and guidance, the following principles were endorsed by the City Council for use in preparing this General Plan:

- No major changes in land-use patterns are expected to occur.
- Emphasis will be on quality of development.
- Incentives, if used, will have clear criteria and limits.
- Emphasis will be on impacts of development, not on the type of development itself.
- Increased residential development, where allowed, must be done with care in order to enhance neighborhoods.
- New development in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor will be encouraged to take place in mixed-use nodes that may extend up selected perpendicular streets in order to allow a more pedestrian friendly environment.
- Attention will be paid to natural features—trees, creeks, natural open space areas—and historical features in making the City a more attractive place.
- The City should have a center (downtown or a civic center or a combination) plus community meeting places.

- Development should contribute to the fiscal health of the City while minimizing adverse impacts.
- Access should be improved, with an emphasis on transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Appendix E

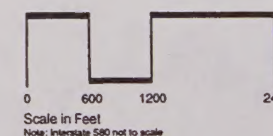
Land Use Amendments

EL CERRITO GENERAL PLAN PROPOSED LAND USE AMENDMENTS

See Attached Text for Map Key.



THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS. THE
CITY OF EL CERRITO DOES NOT ASSUME
LIABILITY FOR USE OF THIS MAP FOR ANY
OTHER PURPOSE.



Prepared for:
City of El Cerrito

Prepared by:
MIG, Inc.
800 Icarus Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704-7549



Key to Proposed Land Use Amendments Map

Description of changes in land use designations proposed to be included in the 1999 General Plan update, as compared to the 1975 General Plan (see back of Figure 5)

General Change for Commercial Sites

All areas shown on 1975 General Plan land use map as "Commercial" are proposed to be re-designated as "Commercial/Mixed Use."

Proposed Changes for Specific Sites

1. Vacant frontage along Key Boulevard, near north city limit; from High Density Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use; to encourage coordinated development with Baxter Creek and property fronting on San Pablo Avenue.
2. Play field adjacent to Prospect-Sierra School Tapscott campus; from Institutional to Parks and Open Space; to recognize City ownership which makes this site a part of Canyon Trail Park.
3. Windrush School at Elm and Hill; from Low Density Residential to Institutional; to designate both public and private schools uniformly as Institutional land use.
4. Del Norte BART station, east parking areas; from Institutional and Utility to Commercial/Mixed Use; to permit eventual development of parking areas under BART's Joint Development Program. (The west parking lot was previously designated Commercial, and is part of the general area now proposed for Commercial/Mixed Use.)
5. West El Cerrito, south of Potrero Avenue; from Medium Density Residential to Low Density Residential; to recognize the prevalent single-family character of the neighborhood, making this area the same designation as the blocks north of Potrero.
6. Commercial site at Potrero and Liberty Street; from Medium Density Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use; to designate this location the same as the neighborhood commercial centers on upper Fairmount and Stockton Avenues.
7. St. John's School sites on either side of Kearney Street; from High Density Residential to Institutional; to designate both public and private schools uniformly as Institutional land use.
- 8, 9, 10. Commercial and mixed use sites along both sides of San Pablo Avenue between Manila and Potrero Avenues; from High Density Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use; to better match the existing mix of uses.
11. Vicinity of City Public Safety Building at Manila and San Pablo; adjustments to include the proposed City Hall site in the Institutional designation, and a portion of Civic Plaza Apartments in the High Density Residential area; to reflect the extent of the existing apartment complex and intentions to expanded City facilities.
12. Present City Hall site and a portion of DMV site; from Institutional to Commercial/Mixed Use; to allow for eventual disposition of the City Hall site for private development.
13. Residential area along Kearney Street and Lexington Avenue, between Moeser Lane and Stockton Avenue (except properties fronting on Moeser and Stockton); from Mixed Use to High Density Residential; to reflect the existing residential, non-commercial character of the area.
14. Residential area along Kearney Street, Lexington Avenue and Liberty Street between Eureka and Fairmount Avenues; from Mixed Use to High Density Residential; to reflect the existing residential, non-commercial character of the area (except frontages on Fairmount Avenue for Commercial, Mixed Use).
15. Plaza BART station and parking lots; from Institutional and Utility to High Density Residential; to permit eventual development of parking areas under BART's Joint Development Program.
16. Vacant land at Colusa and Carmel Avenues; from Low Density Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use; to reflect existing zoning of the northern portion of the site, to be consistent with the designation in the Housing Element as a housing opportunity site, and to allow for coordinated planning of the full site.

Key (cont'd)

17. St. Jerome's School at San Carlos and Colusa Avenues; from Low Density Residential to Institutional; to designate both public and private schools uniformly as Institutional land use.
18. City-owned property which is part of Central Park; from High Density Residential to Parks and Open Space; to recognize this small site which is El Cerrito's portion of the park which is otherwise located in Richmond (El Cerrito maintains the whole park under agreement with Richmond).
19. A strip along Cerrito Creek from BART to Creekside Park; from Commercial and High Density Residential to Parks and Open Space; to signify the City's interest in preserving Cerrito Creek for conservation and recreation purposes.
20. El Cerrito Highlands (at Mira Vista golf course); from Parks and Open Space to Very Low Density Residential; to conform to the zoning change and development which took place in 1980's.
21. Madera School subdivision; from Institutional to Very Low Density Residential; to conform to the disposition of a portion of Madera School property in the 1980's and its subsequent residential development.
22. Southern tip of Mira Vista golf course; from Very Low Density Residential to Parks and Open Space; to correct an apparent drafting error in the 1975 map.
23. EBMUD reservoir above Thors Bay Road; from Very Low Density Residential to Parks and Open Space; to reflect annexation of the reservoir site in 1978 and to designate the whole site as open space, consistent with other reservoir sites.
24. Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp; from Very Low Density Residential to Parks and Open Space; to be consistent with current use and the open space zoning which was applied to the site in 1977.

Other Sites Not Proposed for Changes as part of General Plan Update

Two sites discussed below are not proposed for change as part of the General plan update, but their circumstances may warrant consideration of amendments in the future. Both sites were designated for Open Space by the 1975 General Plan, but both sites are currently privately owned and neither is in active use as open space. In both cases amendments to the General Plan would be initiated by the owners, and reviews of potential environmental impacts of development would be conducted prior to any City approvals.

25. A site of approximately 7 acres at the west end of Buckingham Drive, used for residential purposes. If the site were to be subdivided for additional residential lots, or otherwise proposed for a new use other than park or open space, a change of land use designation would be required.
26. A site of approximately 4 acres between Moeser Lane and the PGE transmission lines, near Seaview Avenue. In 1996 the property was sold by the City. The buyer has stated an intention to subdivide the property for single-family lots. A General Plan amendment would need to be considered as part of an application for approval of a subdivision of the site.
27. City-owned site south of Moeser and Seaview to open space.
28. Six vacant City-owned lots on Roger Court changed to open space.

Appendix F

Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX F GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessory Unit

A Self-contained living unit, either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. Sometimes called second unit or “Granny Flat.”

Acres (Gross)

The entire acreage of a site. Most communities calculate gross acreage to the centerline of proposed bounding streets and to the edge of the right-of-way of existing or dedicated streets.

Acres (Net)

Portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road rights-of-way, public open space, and flood ways.

Annex

To incorporate a land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of the annexing jurisdiction.

Action Plan

An Action Plan is a plan for the improvement and maintenance of the Regional Routes and of transit within a sub-region, prepared by the RTPC and implemented through the use of return to source funding and capital improvement programs of each City and by the funded projects of the CCTA.

Affordable Housing

Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low, or moderate income, based on a household’s ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing including utilities.

Alquist-Priolo Act, Seismic Hazard Zone

A seismic hazard zone designated by the State of California within which specialized geologic investigations must be prepared prior to approval of certain development.

Ambient

Background noise level that surrounds a listener.

Arterial

See “Major Arterial” or “Minor Arterial”

Average Daily Trips (ADT)

The total volume of traffic on a roadway section.

Basic Routes (Measure C)

All local roads not designated as Routes of Regional Significance; Level of Service standards apply to all signalized intersections on Basic Routes.

Buffer

An area designed to provide a separation between two, sometimes incompatible, land uses.

Capital Improvement Program

A capital improvement program is a multi-year budgeting tool that programs capital facilities for construction or acquisition.

Clustered Development

Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed in closer proximity than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining open space area.

Collector Street

A street intended to provide both mobility and access to adjoining land uses. These roadways move vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic within and between areas of the City. As their name implies, collector streets are intended to collect traffic from local streets and channel it to the wider arterial street system.

Commercial (neighborhood-serving)

Uses intended to serve the cultural, civic, social, and other consumer and shopping needs of neighborhood residents (example: Solano Avenue).

Commercial (regional-serving)

Uses intended to maintain, support, and create areas that serve as region-drawing centers of activity, and attract patrons from within and outside City limits. These types of uses usually require significant parking areas, and are generally located adjacent to regional transportation facilities with good access and visibility. (Example: East Bay Bridge shopping complex in Emeryville.)

Commercial (specialty retail)

Uses intended to serve a variety of consumers with no major anchor tenant, but featuring restaurants, boutiques, artisan shops, and specialty food shops (many of which or all of which have no connection with national chains. Buildings are typically single-level and clustered around an open pedestrian mall. (Example: Fourth Street in Berkeley.)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Condominium

A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units.

Congestion Management Plan (CMP)

A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, development mitigation programs, transportation systems management, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized areas, to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan. Compliance by jurisdictions allows for increased gas tax funding.

Contra Costa County Transportation Authority (CCTA)

The CCTA is designated by Measure C for the implementation of the one half cent sales tax and the Growth Management programs. Transportation professionals staff CCTA. The Board is made up of elected officials from the 18 cities and the county.

Creek/Stream

A creek or stream, as defined by California Code of Regulations, is a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic wildlife. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation.

Critical Facility

Facilities housing or serving many people which are necessary in the event of an earthquake or flood, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities, utility "lifeline" facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply, sewage disposal, and communications and transportation facilities.

Decibel (dB)

A unit of measurement of the intensity of sound. The decibel scale is logarithmic, with each increase of ten decibels equaling ten times the intensity of sound.

DBA

The abbreviation for the "A-weighted" scale for measuring sound in decibels which weights or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies to better simulate the range of human hearing.

Dedication

The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used.

Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city.

Dedication (In lieu of)

Cash payments which may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in lieu fees or in lieu contributions.

Density (Residential)

The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre. Density can be controlled through zoning in the following ways: use restrictions, minimum lot-size requirements, floor area ratios, land use-intensity ratios, setback and yard requirements, minimum house-size requirements, ratios comparing number and types of housing units to land area, limits on units per acre, and other means. Allowable density often serves as the major distinction between residential districts. (See “Acres, Gross,” and “Acres, Net.”).

Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location. Under California law, a housing development that provides 20 percent of its units for lower income households, or 10 percent of its units for very low-income households, or 50 percent of its units for seniors, is entitled to a density bonus.

Density Transfer

A way of retaining open space by concentrating densities, usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities, while leaving unchanged historic, sensitive, or hazardous areas. In some jurisdictions, for example, developers can buy development rights of properties targeted for public open space and transfer the additional density to the base number of units permitted in the zone in which they propose to develop.

Development Node

An area, usually located at a major street intersection or transit stop, designed to accommodate a concentration of higher intensity uses than that which occurs in the surrounding area. Development nodes, depending upon their size, may function as town, community, or neighborhood centers.

Duplex

A detached building under single ownership that is designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other.

Dwelling Unit

A building or portion of a building designed as the residence of one family.

Elderly Housing

Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them.

Emergency Shelter

A facility that provides immediate and short-term housing and supplemental services for the homeless. Shelters come in many sizes, but an optimum size is considered to be 20 to 40 beds. Supplemental services may include food, counseling, and access to other social programs.

Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant whose prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Exaction

A contribution or payment required as an authorized precondition for receiving a development permit; usually refers to mandatory dedication (or fee in lieu of dedication) requirements found in many subdivision regulations.

Family Apartment

A rental unit in which two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption reside.

Flood, 100-Year

The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

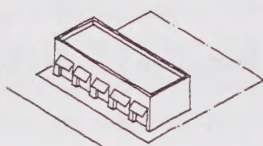
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a measure of relative site development intensity. FAR is the measure of the gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For examples, on a site with 10,000 net sq. ft. of land area, a maximum FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 sq. ft. of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 sq. ft. of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 sq. ft.; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 sq. ft.

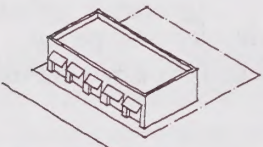
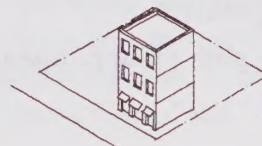
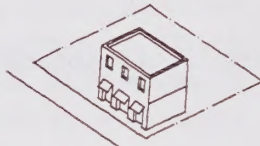
$$\text{Floor Area Ratio (FAR)} = \frac{\text{Gross Allowable Building Floor Area (sq. ft.)}}{\text{Net Site Area (sq. ft.)}}$$

Examples of Floor Area Ratios:

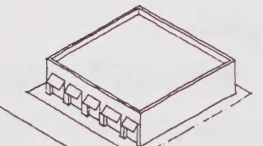
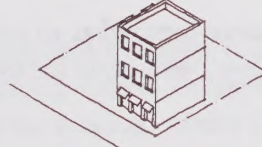
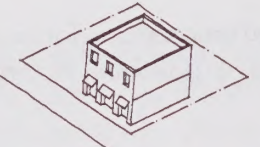
(Note that in each example, the floor area remains the same and the FAR remains the same. However, the building arrangement on the lot changes. The FAR measure is a “ratio” and will remain the same if the lot size and building sizes are proportionally larger.)



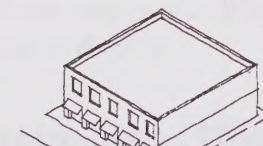
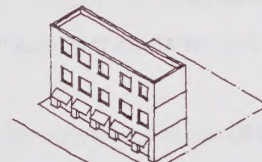
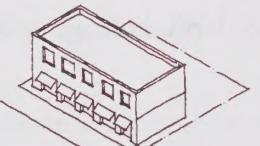
Example 1: FAR 0.30



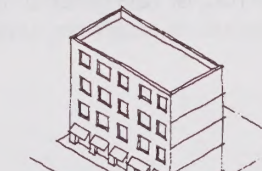
Example 2: FAR 0.50



Example 3: FAR 1.0



Example 4: FAR 2.0



Example 5: FAR 3.0



Freeway

A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and countywide travels. Such roads are free of tolls, as contrasted with “turnpikes” or other “toll roads” which are now being introduced into Southern California. Freeways generally are used for long trips between major land use generators. At Level of Service “E,” they carry approximately 1,875 vehicles per lane per hour, in both directions. Major streets cross at a different grade level.

General Plan

A compendium of city or county policies regarding long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council or Board of Supervisors. In California, the General Plan has seven (7) mandatory elements (circulation, conservation, housing, land use, noise, open space, safety and seismic safety) and may include any number of optional elements.

Goals

Goals are broad statements of direction leading toward a desired end state or vision.

Geologic Review

The analysis of geologic hazards, including all potential seismic hazards, surface ruptures, liquefaction, landsliding, mudsliding, and the potential for erosion and sedimentation.

Ground Failure

Ground movement or rupture caused by strong shaking during an earthquake. Includes landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, and subsidence.

Habitat

The place or type of site where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.

Hazardous Material

Any substance that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, hazardous substances and hazardous wastes.

Historic; Historical

An historic building or site is one that is noteworthy for its significance in local, state, or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

Any vehicle other than a driver-only automobile (e.g., a vanpool, a bus, or two or more persons to a car).

Household

All those persons—related or unrelated—who occupy a single housing unit.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure means capital facilities (usually publicly owned) that provide for transportation and utility services. Infrastructure includes streets, highways, water lines, and storm and sanitary sewer lines.

Impervious Surface

Surface through which water cannot penetrate, such as roof, road, sidewalk, and paved parking lot. The amount of impervious surface increases with development and establishes the need for drainage facilities to carry the increased runoff.

Jobs/Housing Balance

For purposes of the General Plan, jobs/housing balance is defined as the reasonable opportunity for people to live and work within a defined area that generally encompasses the City's sphere of influence (SOI). The ratio of jobs to housing units in a community or the reasonable opportunity for people to live and work within the City's Sphere of Influence.

Landscaping

Planting—including trees, shrubs, and ground covers—suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained as to enhance a site or roadway permanently.

Ldn

An abbreviation for average day-night sound level that places greater emphasis on noise generated between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 am.

Level of Service (Transportation)

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measurement of the degree of congestion of a roadway. LOS is described by a letter scale from A to F. "A" represents the best service and "F" represents the worst service. LOS E occurs when the volume of traffic approaches the road's capacity. LOS E is characterized by low operating speeds and numerous delays with congestion. LOS F represents a forced flow situation with more traffic attempting to use a road than it can handle. LOS F is characterized by stop-and-go traffic with numerous lengthy delays. Definitions are as follows:

- *Level of Service A* – Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.
- *Level of Service B* – Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. All queues clear in a single signal cycle.
- *Level of Service C* – Denotes a reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.
- *Level of Service D* – Denotes the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.

- *Level of Service E* – Describes traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping, long-standing queues, and blocked intersections.
- *Level of Service F* – Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic characterized by “traffic jams” and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and “upstream” intersections may be blocked by the long queues.

Level of Service Standards (Non-Transportation Facilities)

Standards for levels of service relating to municipal functions such as police, fire, and library service. These standards are incorporated into El Cerrito’s General Plan Growth Management Element. For the purposes of El Cerrito’s Growth Management Element, level of service standards for non-transportation facilities are an objective measurement of a City’s ability to provide a particular service to the community. An example would be the maximum response time in minutes of the first fire vehicle to an emergency call anywhere in a City.

Liquefaction

The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often because of ground shaking during an earthquake.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

A five-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county’s LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. The five LAFCO members generally include two county supervisors, two city council members, and one member representing the public. Some LAFCOs include members who are directors of special districts.

Local Street

Primarily low-speed roadways that provide access between land uses and channel traffic to collector streets. Local streets serve all types of land uses, including residential and commercial uses, as well as parks and recreation spaces. Local streets accommodate one traffic lane in each direction and typically are provided in narrower rights-of-way than the larger volume streets. Local streets include both through streets, loop streets, cul-de-sacs, alleyways, and other smaller access roads.

Major Arterial

Streets that provide intracity and some intercity mobility as efficiently and safely as possible. Generally, arterial streets also provide some access to adjacent land uses. Major arterial streets provide two lanes of travel in each direction and separate turn lanes at most intersections. Major intersections are controlled by signalized intersections, and in many locations turning movements are restricted by medians.

Measure “C”

The voters of Contra Costa County adopted measure “C” in November 1988. It established a .5% sales tax throughout the County. Money from that sales tax is dedicated to development and improvement of

transportation facilities in Contra Costa County. Local jurisdictions must develop and maintain a Growth Management Element in their General Plans to be eligible for Measure “C” funds.

Minor Arterial

Streets that provide intracity mobility and access as efficiently and safely as possible and to provide access to adjacent land uses. Minor arterials typically provide one lane of travel in each direction with turn lanes at major intersections. Many intersections are controlled by traffic signals, but stop sign control is also common, normally with stops on the minor cross-streets only.

Mitigation

An action that reduces the impact or effect of a development or capital project.

Mixed Use

Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A “single site” may include contiguous properties.

Multiple Family Building

A detached building designed and used exclusively as a dwelling by three or more families occupying separate suites.

National Register of Historic Places

The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation’s history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

Noise Contour

A line indicated on a map that connects points of equal noise level.

Open Space Land

Any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) the managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety.

Peak Hour/Peak Period

For any given roadway, a daily period during which the highest number of trips occur during a single hour in the day, usually occurring in the morning and evening commute periods. Where “F” Levels of Service are encountered, the “peak hour” may stretch into a “peak period” of several hours’ duration.

Planning Area

The Planning Area is the land area addressed by the General Plan. Typically, the Planning Area boundary coincides with the Sphere of Influence that encompasses land both within the City Limits and potentially annexable land.

Policies

Policies establish a recognized community position on a particular issue and, with programs, serve to implement General Plan goals. General Plan policies are set forth both as written text and as policy maps, such as the Land Use Plan. These are complimentary; written policies set forth the basic approach to be taken while the policy maps show the intended spatial application of the policies.

Programs

Specific actions have been identified that the City, either alone or in coordination with other entities, will try to undertake to implement the plan. For example, zoning must be consistent with the land use designations in the General Plan.

Rare Species

A plant species that exists in limited localities, small numbers, or in disappearing habitat; may become threatened or endangered.

Redevelopment

Redevelopment: a tool authorized by the California Health and Safety Code for eliminating physical and economic blight; an aide to realizing general plan objectives for more beneficial uses of land. Under state law, the growth in property taxes collected within a designated redevelopment project area may be assigned to a Redevelopment Agency to fund activities related to blight removal. In 1977 El Cerrito designated a redevelopment project area which stretches generally along San Pablo Avenue; the project is obliged to retire all debt by 2022, after which time all property taxes will flow to the City and other taxing jurisdictions including the local school district.

Regional Routes (Measure C)

Regional routes are designated by the Transportation Authority's Regional Committees and ultimately approved by the CCTA. Regional routes are defined as roads that may: (1) Connect two or more "regions" of the County; (2) Cross County boundaries; (3) Carry a significant amount of traffic; or, (4) Provide access to a regional highway or transit facility. These roads are subject to objectives and programs in adopted Subregional Action Plans.

Residential (Multiple Family)

Usually three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.

Residential (Single-family)

A single dwelling unit on a building site.

Rezoning

An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Ridgeline

A line connecting the highest points along a ridge and separating drainage basins or small-scale drainage systems from one another.

Riparian Habitat

Pertaining to areas adjacent to streams that support natural vegetation and wildlife.

Senior Housing

Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them.

Single-family Dwelling (Attached)

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally connected with at least one other such dwelling unit.

Single-family Dwelling (Detached)

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally independent from any other such dwelling unit or structure intended for residential or other use.

Solar Access

The provision of direct sunlight to an area specified for solar energy collection when the sun's azimuth is within 45 degrees of true south.

Special Concern

An animal species considered by the State to be limited in distribution and potentially threatened but not officially listed.

Sphere of Influence

The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency (city or district) as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the County.

Standards

(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of

park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the “traffic Level of Service” (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions; for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

Strategic Action Plan

A Strategic Action Plan delineates and prioritizes the actions, projects, programs and initiatives the City and community will initiate to achieve the community’s vision for the future. The Strategic Action Plan identifies the organizations responsible for implementation actions, the time frame within which the action could reasonably be undertaken, and potential funding sources. It is a plan of action for the short and long term, intended to efficiently manage the community’s limited resources by concentrating on strategies that will have the greatest impact and influence on desired changes.

Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework includes an identification of the major issues facing El Cerrito, a description of the overall Vision for the City’s future, and a Strategic Action Plan (see Strategic Action Plan definition).

Strategic Initiative

The Strategic Initiative is a collaborative management approach to the implementation of strategies in the Strategic Action Plan. This approach is based on combining the resources of all segments of the community to successfully achieve plan objectives. A Strategic Initiative is intended to be innovative and groundbreaking – these efforts often generate new methods, management practices, and financing tools, as well as new partnerships within the community (government, community organizations, and private business). The goal is to collectively achieve goals or objectives that cannot be achieved as effectively alone and to effectively utilize limited community resources to achieve the community’s goals.”

Street Trees

Trees strategically planted— usually in parkway strips, medians, or along streets— to enhance the visual quality of a street.

Street Tree Plan

A comprehensive plan for all city street trees which sets goals for solar access, and standards for species selection, maintenance, and replacement criteria, and for planting trees in patterns that will define neighborhood character while avoiding monotony or maintenance problems.

Subdivision

The division of a tract of land into defined lots, either improved or unimproved, which can be separately conveyed by sale or lease, and which can be altered or developed. “Subdivision” includes a condominium project as defined in Section 1350 of the California Civil Code and a community apartment project as defined in Section 11004 of the Business and Professions Code.

Subdivision Map Act

Division 2 (Sections 66410 et seq) of the California Government code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See "Subdivision.")

Subsidence

The sudden sinking or gradual downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence may be caused by a variety of human and natural activities, including earthquakes.

Tax Increment

Additional tax revenues that result from increases in property values within a redevelopment area. State law permits the tax increment to be earmarked for redevelopment purposes, but requires at least 20 percent to be used to increase and improve the community's supply of very low- and low-income housing.

Threatened Species

A plant or animal species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

Townhouse; Townhome

A one-family dwelling in a row of at least three such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more common and fire-resistant walls. Townhouses usually have separate utilities; however, in some condominium situations, common areas are serviced by utilities purchased by a homeowners association on behalf of all townhouse members of the association.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The transportation management technique in which local jurisdictions require businesses with more than 100 employees to implement programs to increase average vehicular ridership, thus reducing congestion on basic and regional routes. Adoption of a TDM ordinance is required for compliance with the provisions of Measure C and qualification for Local Street Maintenance and Improvement Funds.

Trip

A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end," (or origin—often from home, but not always), and one "attraction end," (destination).

Trip Generation

The dynamics that account for people making trips in automobiles or by means of public transportation. Trip generation is the basis for estimating the level of use for a transportation system and the impact of additional development or transportation facilities on an existing, local transportation system. Trip generations of households are correlated with destinations that attract household members for specific purposes.

Uniform Building Code (UBC)

A national, standard building code that sets forth minimum standards for construction?

Uniform Housing Code (UHC)

State housing regulations governing the condition of habitable structures with regard to health and safety standards and which provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of housing in accordance with the Uniform Building Code (UBC).

Urban Services

Utilities (such as water, gas, electricity, and sewer) and public services (such as police, fire, schools, parks, and recreation) provided to an urbanized or urbanizing area.

Use

The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the City's zoning ordinance and General Plan land use designations.

Use Permit

The discretionary and conditional review of an activity or function or operation on a site or in a building or facility.

Volume/Capacity Ratio (V/C)

V/C ratio is a quantitative estimate of the ratio of a street segment, or intersection, volume divided by its capacity. The V/C ratio can be calculated for either present or future conditions. V/C ratios can be translated into LOS standards. At a V/C ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity. Although ratios slightly greater than 1.0 are possible, it is more likely that the peak hour will elongate into a "peak period."

Wetland

Wetlands, as defined by the Army Corps of Engineers, are those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC)

WCCTAC is a regional sub-committee of the CCTA that addresses transportation issues in western Contra Costa County. WCCTAC is established as a nine-member Joint Powers Agreement between the 5 cities of Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, Hercules and Pinole, Contra Costa County, BART and the transit agencies.

Zoning

The division of a city by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the General Plan.

Zoning, Incentive

The awarding of bonus credits to a development in the form of allowing more intensive use of land if public benefits— such as preservation of greater than the minimum required open space, provision for low- and moderate-income housing, or plans for public plazas and courts at ground level— are included in a project.

Zoning Map

Government Code Section 65851 permits a legislative body to divide a county, a city, or portions thereof, into zones of the number, shape, and area it deems best suited to carry out the purposes of the zoning ordinance. These zones are delineated on a map or maps, called the Zoning Map.

Appendix G

Glossary of Terms

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 1999

TO: Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission, City Manager

FR: Edward Phillips, City Planner *EP*

cc: General Plan Process Team, Consulting Team, City Attorney

RE: Background paper on issues of residential density, incentives, and housing requirements

In the course of the General Plan update process, it has become clear that many people have not had sufficient information by which to understand the concepts, regulations and terminology which define "residential density." Without such background it has been particularly difficult to understand the impact of the "Incentives Program" which can be used to increase density. There has also been some lack of understanding of obligations, imposed on the City by State laws, to help assure adequate housing opportunities.

The purpose of this report is to help Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners and the public to have a common understanding of residential density and housing requirements as the update process moves ahead. A by-product of the preparation of this report has been the identification of some inconsistencies which should be resolved through the update process.

This report has four parts:

- A. Residential density in El Cerrito, with examples (listed in Table 1 and shown in attached photos.)
- B. Incentives Program: History and results of, with examples (listed in Table 2 and shown in attached photos.)
- C. Review and status of the obligation to provide housing for low and moderate income households.
- D. Issues for the General Plan update process.

A. RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN EL CERRITO

1. Defining density. The term "residential density" is used as a basic measurement of the use of land for dwelling purposes. It describes how many dwelling units occupy a given space. Density is usually expressed in terms of "dwelling units per acre," often abbreviated as "du/a."

One of the State requirements for a local general plan is that it include a statement of "standards of population density and building intensity." Population density is essentially derived from multiplying the anticipated household size by the number of anticipated dwelling units. Building intensity is normally measured by dwelling units per acre for residential use, and in terms of a ratio of floor space to site area for non-residential uses. This report confines itself to matters related to the use of land for residential purposes.

General plans of cities usually show several categories of residential density, commonly described in a range of "low" to "high," with a numerical range assigned to each. For example El Cerrito's current General Plan includes a category of High Density, which allows 0 to 35 units per net acre. "Net acre" refers to the useable area of a development site, exclusive of streets or portions of a site which might be assigned to other use. "Gross acreage" refers usually to a large area of land in its pre-development stage which might require dedications of streets and possibly other public areas. A rule of thumb is that a net acre is about 80% of a gross acre. In El Cerrito, where there is very little opportunity for subdividing large tracts of land and the street system is virtually completed, "net acre" is the most useful unit of land area for planning purposes.

Zoning ordinances take general plan density descriptions a step further and establish minimum site areas for dwelling units. For example, El Cerrito's Zoning Ordinance assigns some areas near San Pablo Avenue to an "R-3 Multiple-Family Residential District," and specifies that 15,000 square feet of site area is required to build an apartment structure containing 12 dwelling units. This means that 12 units will be allowed on 0.34 acre (15000 sf divided by 43560 sf). That equates to a "density" of 35 units per acre, which is what is allowed in the General Plan's High Density areas.

It should be noted that the reckoning of density by units per acre, while useful for purposes of a general plan, is an imperfect measurement of the actual effects of development. For example a high density development for seniors, containing small efficiency or one-bedroom apartments and relatively little parking, might have half the building mass of a condominium having the same number of units per acre but containing a large number of two- and three-bedroom units and two parking spaces per unit. Similarly, a group of small single-story houses at 8 units per acre differs from a group of two-story houses not only in appearance, but in the likely numbers of inhabitants and automobiles accommodated. For a more precise calculation of density which addresses the bulk of buildings, a floor/area ratio may be used as a gauge of residential development, or sometimes a more complex "land use intensity" scale is used.

2. El Cerrito General Plan and Zoning: El Cerrito, along with all local jurisdictions in California, is subject to a State law which requires that the Zoning Ordinance, as well as other land use regulations, be "consistent" with the General Plan. The consistency rule also applies to all City decisions regarding land use. When changes to the General Plan are made which affect land development standards, such as standards for residential density, corresponding changes to the Zoning Ordinance are required.

1975 General Plan: In 1975 the City made major revisions to its General Plan. Pages V-6 and V-7 (Attachment 1) of the 1975 General Plan provide a description of the types of development expected under each residential density category, and the units per acre to be permitted in each category. As part of the 1975 General Plan revision, the Land Use Map was redrawn to reduce the extent of high density development sites which had previously been designated.

1975-76 zoning amendments: Adoption of the 1975 General Plan prompted several steps which reduced the potential for multi-family development. During 1975 and 1976 there was a series of down-zonings which changed R-3 zones to R-2 zones, and R-2 zones to R-1 zones. Under the zoning ordinance in effect from 1961 to 1976, some blocks near the Plaza BART station had been in an R-5 district which permitted up to 70 units per acre, provided that a site had over 10000 square feet and a building of three or more stories was proposed. As part of the down-zoning program, the R-5 zone was reduced to an R-3 zone which allowed a maximum 35 units per acre, corresponding to the new maximum stated in the General Plan.

1977 Zoning Ordinance: In response to the revised General Plan, the City completed an extensive overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance in 1977. Zoning revisions included the following provisions relating to residential density:

- The new Zoning Ordinance established a graduated density scale for the R-3 district, so that only two units could be built on a 5000 square foot lot, four units would require a 7700 square foot lot, and the maximum density of 35 units per acre could only be reached on a lot of 15000 square feet or more. This responded to extensive discussion in the 1975 General Plan, under the heading of High Density, of negative aspects of the practice, prevalent in 1975 and earlier, of building four apartments per 5000 square foot lot.
- Housing for the elderly and handicapped was permitted as a conditional use in all zoning districts. This was meant to allow for implementation of a "special density exemption" for housing for elderly and handicapped, as stated on page V-7 of the General Plan.
- The revised Zoning Ordinance included an "Incentives Program," designed to allow flexibility in the administration of development standards such as density, setbacks, height limits and parking requirements. The Incentives Program allowed for many of the kinds of variations already allowed through the "Planned Development Combining District," but made the advantages available through a simpler process. The Incentives Program is the subject of Part B of this report.

1977 General Plan Amendment: Two years after adoption of the 1975 General Plan, the City decided that a density of more than 35 units per acre was warranted in certain limited areas, and the General Plan was amended accordingly. For specified areas the density limit was increased to 45 units per acre, provided approval was granted under procedures of the Incentives Program, or the Planned Development provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. (See Attachment 3, Council Resolution 3858.) Two types of locations were designated:

1. All areas designated by the General Plan as mixed High Density Residential/Commercial
2. An area adjacent to the Del Norte BART station (bounded on the south by Blake Street, on the east by Elm Street, on the north by Hill Street, and on the west by the BART line.)

At the same time in 1977, the City revised the mixed-use provision of page V-10 of the General Plan to make a more positive statement in support of the mixing of uses. (See attached page V-10 in Attachment 1; and Attachment 3, Council Resolution 3857.)

1989 General Plan Amendment: Council Resolution 89-60 (Attachment 4) incorporated the Incentives Program into the General Plan with a statement saying "the maximum densities set forth for the various General Plan residential categories are expressly made subject to increase for qualifying new residential developments in accordance with the provisions of the Incentives Program..."

Neither the Resolution nor the text of the amendment stated that the 1977 General Plan amendment was superceded by the new language. However, from documents related to the 1989 amendment, it is clear that the purpose of the new amendment was to provide additional flexibility regarding development, by allowing density in excess of 45 units per acre and not subjecting density increases to the geographical limits described in the 1977 General Plan amendment.

3. Examples of density in El Cerrito: Table 1 provides comparisons of El Cerrito's General Plan density categories with the corresponding zoning districts and minimum lot areas. The table also shows typical buildings or developments which are found in each category, with specific examples of each type. Table 1 also gives examples of projects where extra-high density has been allowed under the Incentives Program. Examples of the types of developments are illustrated in attached photos.

Table 1 includes historic references, in that it makes note of development which remains from earlier times when different standards were in effect. Significantly, large areas of the city are made up of blocks where lots average about 3500 square feet as opposed to the current minimum requirement of 5000 square feet. This has the effect of pushing some single family areas into the "medium density" category of the 1975 General Plan. Some relatively new apartment buildings built in the early '70's have densities as high as 70 units per acre, as was permitted under the R-5 Zoning district. That district classification and the extra density were eliminated by a 1976 zoning amendment, as a step toward implementing the 1975 General Plan.

4. State-mandated density bonus: California law requires cities to provide incentives to incentives to developers who propose housing projects for lower income households and the elderly. Government Code Section 65915 (g) defines a density bonus as at least 25% over the otherwise maximum allowable residential density under the zoning ordinance and general plan.

State law also requires cities and counties to provide other incentives to developers of lower income housing in order to make such housing financially feasible. Examples of such other incentives include reduction of minimum lot size and the relaxation of parking requirements.

These State requirements for housing incentives are discussed in greater detail in Part C of this background paper.

[Part B follows Table 1]

TABLE 1: RESIDENTIAL DENSITY CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENTS

General Plan Category/Density	Corresponding Zoning / Lot Area	Types of Developm't	Examples
<u>Very low:</u> up to 6 dwelling units/acre (du/a)	R-1-B-1 / 7500 sf min. R-1-B-2 / 10K sf min. R-1-B-3 / 20k sf min.	Single-family (accessory units OK)	-Pebble Beach Dr. -Contra Costa Dr. -Wildcat Dr.
<u>Low:</u> up to 9 du/a	R-1 / 5000 sf min.	Single-family (accessory units OK.)	-Glen Mawr Ave.
	R-1 w/Planned Development overlay	Townhouses	-Wildwood Pl. (8 du/ac)
<u>Medium:</u> up to 20 du/a	R-1 (pre-1933 lots as small as 2500 sf)	Older single family	-Typical block nr. St. Jerome 29 du on 2.75 a (10.5 du/a)
	R-2: 2 du per 5000 sf (17 du/a)	Duplexes	-Coronado and Victoria Sts. @ Fairmount Ave.
	R-1 w/Planned Development overlay	Townhouses	-Rose Park - Richmond St. @ Portola Dr.(12 du/a) -Hill @ Lexington (20 du/a)
<u>High:</u> up to 35 du/a	R-3: 5000 sf min (under 1977 zoning, density increases according to lot size: max. density requires 15k sf site) - Also allowed in commercial districts by use permit	4-plex walk-ups -	-“Study subarea #7” nr. Central/Carlson (35 du/a - built pre-1977 zoning)
		Larger apt. complexes	-6521 Potrero @ Liberty - 6 du over parking (26 du/a) -Civic Plaza 10900 blk SPA- 162 du (35 du/a) -Del Norte Place- 135 du (35 du/a plus retail)
<u>Elderly/Handicapped exception</u>	All zones, with Incentives Program use permit	Usually multi-story w/elevators	-Hazel Shirley Manor - 68 du for seniors (76 du/a)
<u>High: (Incentives)</u> up to 45 du/a (1977 amendment to General Plan)	R-3 or commercial, with Incentives Program use permit	Apartment complexes-meeting community objectives	-1751 Liberty @ Hill - 20 du condo, 20% “affordable” (40 du/a)
<u>High (pre 1975 General Plan):</u> up to 70 du/a	R-5 (1961-1977) allowed up to 70 du/a for buildings of 3 stories or more, on min. 10k sf sites	Elevator buildings over parking (only 1 pkg, space per unit req'd	-6425 Central @Lexington - 21 du (68 du/a) - 1973 - 525 Lexington - 27 du (67 du/a) - 1973 - 535 Liberty - 16 units (70 du/a) - 1975 (last R-5 bldg)

B. INCENTIVES PROGRAM: HISTORY AND RESULTS TO DATE

1. History: As described in Part A, the new Zoning Ordinance of 1977 included an "Incentives Program." Under the heading of "Flexibility," the description of the Incentives Program stated "that desirable characteristics of new development may exceed the requirements" of the Zoning Ordinance, and that zoning provisions can be modified for "closer adherence to the goals of the City." The Incentives Program may have been instituted as an off-set to the new, stricter density limits put in place by the 1975 General Plan.

The 1977 and 1989 amendments to the General Plan have been discussed in Part A of this report. The 1977 amendment allows maximum density to be increased from 35 units per acre to 45 units per acre in specified areas, under procedures of the Incentives Program. The Zoning Ordinance does not state any limit on a density increase; Section 19.32.300 only states that density may be modified. The 1989 amendment, which adopted the Incentives Program as part of the General Plan, allowed use of the Incentives Program for unspecified density increases in all residential use categories.

2. Summary of Incentives Program Text: Attached are two versions of Zoning Ordinance Chapter 19.32, marked as to the respective years of adoption, 1977 and 1997 (Attachments 5 and 6.) Both provide lists of desirable features which would make a development proposal worthy of the granting of specified incentives. Both provide for a preliminary review by the Design Review Board prior to a decision by the Planning Commission regarding a use permit. Based on the City's experience in administering the program over the years, the chapter was revised in 1997. The revision was intended to achieve three purposes: 1) set a higher threshold for what would be considered desirable features; 2) modify the types of incentives offered; and 3) make the review procedure more straightforward.

1. Original 1977 text: Ten desirable features were listed. Though certainly desirable, some of these features were restatements of other city policies or requirements, and did little to earn special consideration for a particular project. Other features were vague in their terminology. The Design Review Board's consideration was required prior to submittal of an application. The procedure referred to written guidelines to be adopted by the Planning Commission but no such guidelines were produced.

2. Amended 1997 text: The new version expanded the list of desirable features to 17. Some features were better-quantified, such as requiring at least 25% more landscaped area in order to warrant an incentive. Others were stated with more precision. Credit for using licensed designers was dropped. Features added to the list included economic stimulus, development which promotes the use of BART stations, and provision of public amenities such as community meeting rooms or child care facilities.

In terms of available incentives, the 1997 amendment eliminated the ability to "increase the number of uses," while specifically adding the possibilities of modifying requirements for landscaping, open space and public improvements. The procedure was modified to require a statement of project objectives as part of the application, to refer the proposal to the Design Review Board after submittal of the application rather than before submittal, and to require the Planning Commission to make written findings based on such factors as how the granting of the incentive will enhance quality of life, how the project will aid the optimum use of land, and how the incentives will help implement adopted City goals.

3. Results of the Incentives Program: Table 2 is an inventory of the residential projects which have been granted a density increase under the Incentives Program. Two projects were offered incentives other than density increases: 1) Del Norte Place did not require a density increase, but was granted reduced setbacks and a height increase under the Incentives program; and 2) the office building at the northwest corner of Potrero and Kearney was given reductions of setbacks and parking plus a height increase.

Five of the eleven projects listed in Table 2 were small projects of less than five units, in which the density increase was sought in order to include one additional unit. (The odd density ratios are a function of the sliding density scale in the R-3 district.)

The only projects which exceeded the 45 units per acre threshold of the 1977 General Plan amendment were the two elderly projects (Hazel Shirley and El Cerrito Royale) and the current project for the disabled (Idaho Apartments). This is consistent with the density exemption for housing for the elderly and handicapped, as provided in the General Plan. The Idaho Apartments project is the only one approved after the 1989 General Plan amendment. Therefore the open-ended character of that amendment has not resulted in any projects of over 45 units per acre, as the Idaho was designed for handicapped occupancy and was thereby eligible for a density increase under the 1975 General Plan.

[Part C follows Table 2]

**TABLE 2: RESULTS OF THE INCENTIVES PROGRAM:
PROJECTS GRANTED DENSITY INCREASES**

#	Location / Size	Year ok'd	Density Increase From > To	Other Incentives	Basis for Approval
1	500 Kearney 5 units	1983	21>26	none	Attractive structure near BART; extra open space; extra unit is only 1 BR.
2	11025 San Pablo (Hazel Shirley Manor) 68 units	1983	35>76	reduced setback, increased height	Attractive structure, upgrades Avenue; Elderly/handicapped; Extra landscaping, rec. space.
3	1751 Liberty 20 unit condo	1984	35>40	reduced parking increased height	Attractive, professionally designed; 20% low/mod.; near BART; enclosed parking; extra landscaping.
4	3242 Belmont 3 units	1985	20>21	none	Extra open space of good quality, modest scale of building.
5	435 Liberty 4 units	1986	17>23	none	Extra setbacks; hidden parking; extra open space.
6	19045 San Pablo (E.C. Village) 19 units plus comm'l space	1986	35>40	reduced setback and parking	Attractive, professionally designed; hidden parking; extra landscaping; mixed-use meets City goals.
7	6510 Gladys (El Cerrito Royale) 103 congregate care units	1987	35>69	reduced setbacks, parking and open space; increased height	Elderly housing.
8	6623 Willow 5 units	1988	21>26	none	Attractive, professionally designed; handicapped parking; one extra parking space; extra landscape w/ play area.
9	1711 Liberty/ 1708 Lexington 20 units	1988	35>39	reduced setback, reduced parking	Attractive, professionally designed; extra open space and landscape; near BART
10	801 Richmond 3 units	1997 pend- ing const.	15>22	reduced setback	Attractive, professionally designed; unobtrusive parking
11	10203 San Pablo (Idaho Apts.) 29 units for disabled persons	1997 under const.	35>50	reduced parking	Attractive, functional, professionally designed; housing for handicapped; unobtrusive parking; substantial landscape.

C. REVIEW AND STATUS OF THE OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE HOUSING FOR LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

The fact that the El Cerrito Redevelopment Agency is currently in compliance with State requirements for production of low and moderate income housing has been widely noted in the community. However, it has not been widely understood that the requirements of the Agency are separate and different from those of the City. The distinctions are discussed in detail in Section VIII of the Alternatives Assessment Report for the General Plan update (copy of section attached as Attachment 7.)

- Briefly stated, the Agency is required to devote 20% of its tax increment to low and moderate income housing, and it must assure that a portion of new or rehabilitated housing in the project area is available for low and moderate income persons.
- The City, on the other hand, is required to pursue the goals of its Housing Element, which include providing for a local "fair share" of regional housing needs.
- The essential difference is that the City has a continuing obligation to pursue specific numerical objectives for city-wide production of housing units, to be distributed by income groups. The Agency only needs to manage its own expenditure of tax increments, and to assure that whatever housing is built within the project area has a sufficient ratio of low or moderate income units.
- The City's obligation does not end with the inclusion of the regional housing allocation in its Housing Element. The City has a legal responsibility, for which it is accountable to the California Department of Housing and Community Development, to effectuate the policies and implementation programs stated in the adopted Housing Element. The City's current Housing Element lists 34 separate implementation programs. These range from studies to be undertaken, to zoning changes to be adopted, to designating specific parcels for specific types of housing development. The City and the Redevelopment Agency have pursued some of the implementation activities as a matter of course; many of the programs have not been undertaken at all. As an example, the City has not revised the Incentives Program to comply with State-mandated density bonus or equivalent incentives. Failure to follow-through with commitments made in the Housing Element could make the City vulnerable in certain legal actions, and it may complicate future State certification of the revised Housing Element which must be updated by 2001.
- The Housing Element contains a list of "Housing Opportunity Sites." The listing demonstrates that sites are available to accommodate housing sufficient to meet the local share of regional needs. There is no specific requirement that each site be developed for housing. However any significant change in the list may affect the City's ability to meet its housing goals. For example, El Cerrito Plaza is listed as a potential site for up to 450 units, (though housing is not intended to replace commercial use). If the City were to establish a General Plan Land Use policy that no residential use would be permitted on the Plaza site, it would probably be necessary to amend the Housing Element to list an adequate and acceptable replacement site or sites.

Additional State requirements: In addition to the obligations contained in the Housing Element to provide housing for low and moderate income households, State law also imposes additional obligations which are contained in Sections 65913 through 65915 of the Government Code. These sections include strong legislative findings and declarations regarding the shortage of housing for low and moderate income households and the strong mandate that local government aid in the development of such housing through the relaxation of land use and zoning controls in order to make such housing financially feasible.

Government code section 65913 requires that local governments zone sufficient land at densities high enough for the production of affordable housing. Section 65913 also requires that local government "make a diligent effort through the administration of land use controls and the provision of regulatory concessions and incentives to significantly reduce housing development costs and thereby facilitate the development of affordable housing"

The obligation to zone sufficient land for residential purposes is also contained in Government Code Section 65913.1. That section requires that sufficient land be zoned for residential uses so that the local entity can meet the housing needs identified in the local general plan.

Government Code Section 65915 was discussed in Part A of this paper in reference to housing densities. That section requires cities to provide density bonuses of 25% or more in order to make housing for low and moderate income households financially feasible. Cities are also required to provide incentives addition to density bonuses. These incentives include reductions in site development standards as well as modifications of zoning requirements and architectural design requirements. Cities are required to adopt ordinances specifying how such density bonuses and incentives will be implemented. To date, El Cerrito has not adopted such an ordinance. This may be because the City has not been approached by a developer seeking the benefits of Section 65915.

It should be noted that several cities have been sued over the past few years by low income housing advocates for the failure: (1) to zone sufficient land at densities high enough for the development of affordable housing; (2) to implement density bonus and incentive programs; and (3) to implement the Housing Element. Such lawsuits can have a significant effect on development activities. For example, in Corte Madera, the Town entered into an agreement with the plaintiffs in the action to place a moratorium on the development of vacant land until the Town Housing Element was updated, sufficient land was zoned residential, and an incentives and density program was enacted.

D. ISSUES FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

In compiling this report on El Cerrito's policies on residential density, development incentives and housing obligations, staff has identified a number of contradictory positions and inconsistent standards. These items are noted below. Each of these deserves discussion, leading to resolution, in the process of updating the General Plan and in subsequent efforts to conform the Zoning Ordinance to the revised General Plan.

1. Upper limits on density: As noted in Part A of this report, State law and guidelines require local general plans to include standards for population density and building intensity. In order to comply, the El Cerrito General Plan needs to state an upper limit on the high density use category. As the General Plan now exists (at least as it has been interpreted over the last ten years) maximum density is open-ended under the Incentives Program. The plan also allows a density exemption, with no specified limit, for housing for the elderly and handicapped.

The revised General Plan should establish a base density limit, and any exceptions to the limit should be defined. For example the base might be 35 units per acre, allowing up to 45 units per acre for such reasons as proximity to BART. In recognition that housing for the elderly and handicapped housing usually has a lower occupancy per unit as well as lower rates of automobile use, these types of housing might be allowed a specified additional measure of units per acre, or perhaps could be calculated on a different scale, such as floor/area ratio.

2. State-mandated density incentives: In determining the base density limit for residential use in the General Plan, the City needs to recognize the State's requirement for a 25% density bonus for low and moderate income housing. The base level to which a bonus would be added needs to be defined. Examples for consideration:

$$35 \text{ u/a} + 25\% = 43.25 \text{ u/a}$$

$$45 \text{ u/a} + 25\% = 56.25 \text{ u/a.}$$

In addition the City needs to comply with the State requirement to adopt procedures for complying with the incentive mandate. As a step toward compliance, the City's adopted Housing Element has stated that the 25% bonus and related State requirements should be incorporated into the City's own Incentives Program; as yet this has not been done, and modification of the Incentives Program should be considered as part of an overall procedure for responding to the State requirement.

3. Density allowed by Housing Element: The Housing Element currently in effect indicates that 45 units per acre are permitted in locations which have been listed as "Housing Opportunity Sites." If the revised General Plan were to eliminate a density of 45 units per acre as a possibility, it may be necessary to amend the Housing Element (with approval by the State Department of Housing and Community Development) immediately rather than in the regular cycle which now calls for El Cerrito to adopt a revised Housing Element in 2001.

4. Applicability of the Incentives Program: The General Plan amendments of 1977 and 1989, and the Housing Element of 1991, do not agree as to where geographically the Incentives Program may be used for density increases. The revised General Plan should provide clarification as to whether the program may be used in all parts of the City; in all high density areas; only in areas near transit; or only within the redevelopment project boundaries.

In evaluating the Incentives Program, consideration should be given to the extent to which that program overlaps with the Planned Development procedure, which can be used in many cases toward the same ends. These may be redundant procedures which could be combined into one.

5. Mixed Use areas: The Land Use Map does not clearly delineate areas for mixed use. The colored map uses symbolism which does not appear to agree with the text of the plan or with the Zoning Ordinance. The General Plan text allows residential/commercial uses around BART stations; the map does not tell us whether that includes areas near stations which are designated for commercial use, such as El Cerrito Plaza. The Zoning Ordinance allows multi-family development in all commercial zones; apparently this includes the possibility of mixed uses. The allowable locations should be clarified in the revised plan, and the Zoning Ordinance should be amended to conform.

Further, the General Plan provides no standards for the mixing of uses. There is need to define what controls apply to combinations of uses: should each use on a site be allowed the maximum intensity for that type of use? Or should there be an overall cap on the intensity of the combination of all uses on a site?

6. Minimum site area for multi-family development: The requirement of the R-3 district for large minimum lot sizes for multi-family development has tended to have an undesired effect. Many individual small lots, for whatever reason, have not been included in larger parcels assemblages. This has resulted in a random pattern of higher density development which has left isolated, single family houses with no effective development potential other than possible splitting of a unit to create a duplex. While the intention of graduated R-3 scale may have been to encourage better projects on larger sites, the main result appears to have been to lock a status quo in place, with aging houses scattered among small and medium-sized apartment buildings built prior to 1977. This particular combination may not result in a desirable land use pattern, and it may not contribute to an objective of concentrating high density near BART stations and transit routes.

CONCLUSION:

This background paper has been prepared in an attempt to collect relevant information on housing densities, incentives and legal requirements. The paper is intended to provide City policy makers and the public with a common knowledge and language for the discussion of density, and is thus intended to be useful in resolving some issues in the update of the General Plan. It should also be useful in following-up on the adoption of the revised General Plan with revisions and corrections to certain City ordinances and policies. Aside from aiding our work on the General Plan, this report will also serve as a reminder that the City's responsibilities to pursue State and regional housing objectives cannot be ignored easily.

If you have questions or comments on the material in this report, please contact Ed Phillips, Gerry Raycraft, or Elisa Tierney in the Community Development Department, or City Attorney Howard Stern.

Attachments:

1. General Plan pages V-6 through V-10
2. Council resolution 3858 - Higher Density
3. Council Resolution 3857 - Mixed Use
4. Council Resolution 89-60 - add Incentives Program to General Plan
5. Zoning chapter 19.32 - Incentives Program - 1977
6. Zoning chapter 19.32 - Incentives Program - 1997 amendment
7. Section VIII of Alternatives Assessment Report - Housing requirements
8. Photo examples of residential densities

Appendix H

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APPENDIX H BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix I

Resolutions

Planning Commission Resolution 99 - 12

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

A RESOLUTION OF THE EL CERRITO PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THAT THE EL CERRITO CITY COUNCIL ADOPT A REVISED GENERAL PLAN AND CERTIFY THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ON THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN.

WHEREAS:

1. The City Council determined previously in 1997 that it was necessary to revise the El Cerrito General Plan, including the Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, Noise and Safety elements, which had not been comprehensively updated and revised since original adoption in 1975, in order to maintain compliance with Government Code Section 65300 et seq.
2. On April 21, 1997, the City Council adopted Resolution 97-23 which requested that the Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), pursuant to Government Code Section 65361, grant the City a two-year extension of time for the preparation and adoption of revisions to said elements; and the Director of OPR approved the City's request for an extension, established a set of rules and procedures to govern the City's exercise of land use authority during the extension period, and established May 1, 1999, as the date by which the City would adopt a revised General Plan.
3. Subsequent to OPR approval of the extension the City selected and contracted with a consultant team; appointed a "General Plan Process Team;" adopted a work program; held a public "Vision Festival;" published an "Existing Conditions Working Paper;" held a city-wide workshop and a series of five smaller group workshops on planning issues; conducted a second round of fifteen neighborhood workshops to review alternative land use patterns; and completed an Alternatives Assessment Report;
4. On January 19, 1999, following a series of joint meetings with the Planning Commission, the City Council adopted Resolution 99-6 approving a "Preferred Land Use Strategy" as the basis for drafting a revised General Plan and a supporting Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
5. In the course of preparing the EIR to assess potentially significant environmental impacts of the Draft Plan, a public scoping session was held on March 9, 1999, preceded by a duly circulated Notice of Preparation.
6. On April 6, 1999, the City published a draft General Plan, with notice to persons who had participated in the various stages of the process, and copies of the Draft were made available to the public through the El Cerrito Library as well as the City Planning Division.
7. On April 16, 1999, the City circulated a Notice of Completion of the draft Environmental Impact Report (State Clearing House # 99022058), initiating a 45 day review public period which ended on June 1, 1999. Copies of the Draft EIR were distributed to local agencies, neighboring jurisdictions and other interested entities, and copies of the Draft General Plan were sent to said agencies as provided by Government Code Section 65352.
8. Upon determining that the process of public review of the Draft General Plan and the Draft EIR and the process of holding public hearings and adopting a revised General Plan could not be completed prior to the OPR deadline of May 1, 1999, the City Council requested a second and final extension, to extend the deadline

to September 15, 1999, and said request was granted by the Director of OPR.

9. The Planning Commission held public workshop session on the Draft General Plan on April 21 and May 12, 1999, and discussed the Draft General Plan in a study session during a regular public meeting on June 8, 1999.

10. On May 12, 1999, during the public comment Period on the Draft EIR, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Draft EIR.

11. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65353 the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the Draft General Plan on June 23, 1999, and continued said hearing to a regular meeting of July 7, 1999. At the conclusion of the public hearing the Commission considered the Draft General Plan document, all written correspondence, verbal testimony, staff reports including a response to comments on the draft plan, a list of recommended modifications to the Draft General Plan, and information contained in the Final EIR including written comments on the Draft EIR and responses to said comments.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the El Cerrito Planning Commission hereby recommends that the El Cerrito City Council adopt the Draft General Plan, dated March 31, 1999, hereby referenced as Exhibit A to this Resolution, with modifications to said Draft as recommended by the Planning Commission on July 7, 1999 and hereby referenced as Exhibit B to this Resolution.

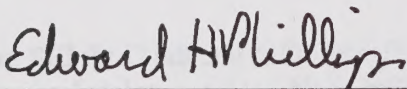
2. That the Planning Commission has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Report and has considered all information contained therein, including analysis of alternatives to the proposed action, and finds that said document is complete in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and that said document is suitable for certification by the City Council.

3. That the Planning Commission recognizes that vehicular traffic resulting from development according to the revised General Plan may have significant unavoidable adverse impacts on air quality, and finds that the benefits of the revised General Plan will outweigh such adverse impacts, and therefore the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt a statement of overriding considerations in conjunction with the certification of the Final EIR.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the El Cerrito Planning Commission at a regular meeting held on July 7, 1999, upon motion of Commissioner Abelson, second by Commissioner McKinley:

AYES:	Abelson, McKinley, Moore, Price, Rogers
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Groch, Potter



Edward H. Phillips, Planning Manager

RESOLUTION NO. 99- 66

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL CERRITO CERTIFYING THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN, ADOPTING THE FINDINGS REQUIRED BY THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), INCLUDING A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS, ADOPTING A MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN AND ADOPTING THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN

A. BACKGROUND

1. In 1997, the El Cerrito City Council determined it was necessary to revise the El Cerrito General Plan, including the Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Noise and Safety elements, which had not been comprehensively updated and revised since the original adoption of that Plan in 1975.
2. On April 21, 1997, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 97-23 which requested that the Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), pursuant to Government Code Section 65361, grant the City a two-year extension of time for the preparation and adoption of a revised General Plan.
3. The Director of OPR approved the City's request for an extension, established a set of rules to govern the City's exercise of land use authority during the extension period, and established May 1, 1999, as the date by which the City would adopt a revised General Plan.
4. Subsequent to the OPR approval of the extension, the City selected and contracted with a consultant team, appointed a "General Plan Process Team," adopted a work program, held a public "Vision Festival," published an "Existing Conditions Working Paper," held a city-wide workshop and a series of five smaller group workshops on planning issues, conducted a second round of fifteen neighborhood workshops to review alternative land use patterns, and completed an Alternatives Assessment Report.
5. On January 19, 1999, following a series of joint meetings between the City Council and the Planning Commission, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 99-6, approved a "Preferred Land Use Strategy" as the basis for drafting the revised General Plan and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for that Plan.
6. As part of the preparation process for the EIR, a public scoping session was held on March 9, 1999, to assess the potentially significant environmental impacts which could result from the Draft General Plan. The scoping session was preceded by a duly circulated Notice of Preparation.

7. On April 6, 1999, the City published a Draft General Plan, with notice to persons who had participated in the various stages of the process. Copies of the Draft General Plan were made available to the public through the El Cerrito Library and the City Planning Division.
8. On April 16, 1999, the City circulated a Notice of Completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) and submitted the Draft EIR to the State Clearinghouse. This initiated a 45 day review period for the Draft EIR which ended on June 1, 1999. Copies of the Draft EIR were distributed to local agencies, neighboring jurisdictions and to all other agencies as required by applicable law, including Government Code Section 65352. Copies of the Draft EIR were made available to interested members of the public through the El Cerrito Library and the City Planning Division.
9. Upon a determination that the process of public review of the Draft General Plan and the Draft EIR and the adoption of the revised General Plan could not be completed prior to the OPR deadline of May 1, 1999, the City Council requested a second and final extension, to extend the deadline for adoption of the revised General Plan to September 15, 1999. This second extension was granted by the Director of OPR.
10. The Planning Commission held public workshops on the Draft General Plan on April 21, 1999 and May 12, 1999. The Planning Commission also held a study session on the Draft General Plan during its regular meeting of June 8, 1999.
11. On May 12, 1999, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the Draft EIR.
12. Pursuant to Government Code Section 653253, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the Draft General Plan on June 23, 1999, and continued the public hearing to a regular meeting held on July 7, 1999. At the conclusion of the July 7, 1999, public hearing, the Planning Commission considered the Draft General Plan, all written correspondence, verbal testimony, staff reports, including a response to comments on the Draft General Plan, a list of recommended modifications to the Draft General Plan, the Draft EIR, written comments and testimony regarding the Draft EIR, and the Final EIR including the response to the comments made through written correspondence and verbal testimony.
13. On July 7, 1999, after consideration of the above, the Planning Commission recommended that the El Cerrito City Council adopt the Draft General Plan, certify the Final EIR for the Draft General Plan and adopt a statement of overriding considerations for those environmental impacts which cannot be significantly mitigated.
14. On August 2, 1999, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing on the Draft General Plan and continued the public hearing to August 30, 1999. At these public hearings, the City Council heard verbal testimony and received written testimony concerning the Draft General Plan and the Final EIR.

15. In taking the actions specified in this Resolution, the City Council relied on the following record:
- a. The documents prepared in connection with the General Plan, including the Existing Conditions Working Paper, the Alternatives Assessment Report and the Preferred Land Use Strategy as well as the written and oral testimony received in connection with the preparation of those documents.
 - b. Documentary and oral evidence received as part of the planning process for the preparation of the General Plan, including evidence received at the Vision Festival, the city-wide workshop, the five smaller group workshops and the fifteen neighborhood workshops on alternative land use patterns.
 - c. Documentary and oral evidence received by the Planning Commission and the City Council during public hearings on the Draft General Plan, including responses to the evidence by City staff and the consulting team.
 - d. The EIR prepared for the General Plan revision, consisting of the Draft EIR and the Final EIR, including documentary and oral evidence received by the Planning Commission and the City Council during the public hearing process on the EIR.
 - e. The recommendations of the Planning Commission regarding the Draft General Plan and the EIR.

B. CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL EIR

16. Before the City Council may approve the revised General Plan, CEQA requires that the City Council certify the Final EIR.
17. The City Council finds that although modifications have been made to the Draft EIR and the Draft General Plan during the public comment and review process, those modifications do not constitute "significant new information" as defined in Section 15088.5 of the CEQA Guidelines so as to require recirculation of the EIR. The modifications made during the review and comment period provided clarification and amplification of the material contained in the Draft documents. No new significant impacts were identified and there was no new and substantial evidence presented concerning the severity of an impact which would result unless new mitigation measures were adopted.
18. Pursuant to Section 15090 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City Council hereby certifies that:
- a. The Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; and

- b. The Final EIR was presented to the City Council and the City Council reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR prior to approving the revisions to the General Plan; and
- c. The Final EIR reflects the City Council's independent judgment and analysis.

C. FINDINGS CONCERNING POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WHICH CAN BE MITIGATED

- 19. Before the City Council may adopt the revised General Plan, CEQA mandates that the City Council identify the potentially significant impacts on the environment likely to result from adoption of the revised General Plan and make certain findings regarding those impacts.
- 20. Attached hereto as Exhibit D, and incorporated herein by reference, is a summary of the potential environmental impacts likely to result from the revised General Plan and the mitigation measures which have been adopted and made a part of the revised General Plan, as General Plan Policies. These General Plan Policies are intended to avoid or substantially lessen the environmental impacts which could result from implementation of the General Plan. This summary has been modified in Section 6.1 of the Final EIR by the inclusion of additional policies which have been incorporated into the revised General Plan in response to the comments received during the public review process. Section 6.1 has also been included as part of Exhibit D and is incorporated herein.
- 21. Pursuant to Section 21081.6(b) of the California Public Resources Code, these policies have been incorporated into the revised General Plan thereby assuring that adoption of the revised General Plan will constitute adoption of the measures intended to mitigate the environmental impacts associated with the Plan.
- 22. In conformance with Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the City Council finds that, with the exception of those environmental impacts deemed significant and unavoidable as will be discussed below, the incorporation of the mitigation measures identified in Exhibit B and in the Final EIR as General Plan policies will avoid or substantially lessen the environmental effects identified in Exhibit D.

D. SUMMARY OF UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS

- 23. The Final EIR identifies two unavoidable significant impacts of the revised General Plan. These impacts cannot be fully mitigated by changes or alterations to the basic project.
- 24. The first unavoidable impact concerns an increase in air pollutant emissions caused by additional vehicle trips generated by development consistent with the revised General Plan. The Plan includes air quality land use strategies to reduce commuting and to reduce the number of vehicle trips. The Plan also includes policies to encourage alternate forms of

transportation, including mass transit, bicycles, etc. However, even with the implementation of these policies, the impact will still be significant. This impact cannot be mitigated without the cooperation of the other jurisdictions in Contra Costa County and the region. This impact is overridden by the benefits of adopting the revised General Plan as set forth in the statement of overriding considerations.

25. The second unavoidable impact concerns an increase in certain criteria pollutant emissions as a result of cumulative development pursuant to the General Plan. Implementation of mitigation measures identified as policies in the revised General Plan, including mitigation measures to reduce auto usage would reduce this impact, but not to a less than significant level. The successful mitigation of this impact would require the coordinated effort of the jurisdictions in Contra Costa County and the region. This impact is overridden by the benefits of adopting the revised General Plan as set forth in the statement of overriding considerations.

E. FINDINGS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF ALTERNATIVES TO THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN

26. The EIR identifies four project alternatives to the revised General Plan. Each alternative is discussed in this section and findings are made regarding the feasibility of each alternative.
27. The first alternative studied was the No Project Alternative. Under this alternative a revised General Plan would not be adopted and the City would continue to operate under the 1975 General Plan. Retaining the current General Plan would be inconsistent with State law since the present General Plan is legally deficient and must be updated to bring it into conformity with State law. Therefore, this alternative is not legally feasible since it places the City in a position of losing its land use powers if a court were to confirm the conclusion that the 1975 General Plan was legally deficient. The revised General Plan represents a continuity with the 1975 General Plan by seeking to achieve a balance between housing, office and retail uses. As such, the revised General Plan represents a refinement of the 1975 General Plan by updating legal requirements and identifying policies which will encourage the City to achieve this balance between housing, office and retail uses as envisioned in both the 1975 Plan and this revised General Plan.
28. The second alternative studied was directed towards maximizing office development by increasing the square footage of office space in the City from its present 122,000 square feet to 1,170,000 square feet. The revised General Plan envisions an increase in office use to 166,572 square feet. An office strategy alternative would be costly to the City since it would require a pro active policy of incentives and initiatives to attract office uses. In view of the limited financial resources available to the City, a strategy aimed at significantly expanding office uses would be financially infeasible. An office strategy also would significantly change the current land use pattern which emphasizes local service retail orientation blended with residential uses. A dramatic change to a major employment center would be infeasible

from a policy perspective because of the disruption this would cause to existing land use patterns. An office strategy also is infeasible because it would not permit the City to meet the legal requirements for housing as contained in the adopted Housing Element. There is no evidence to indicate that the adoption of an office strategy would aid the City in mitigating the unavoidable impacts identified in Section D of this resolution.

29. The third alternative would direct general plan policies to an increase in retail space at the expense of office and housing development. Such a strategy envisions that the City would direct its efforts to attracting major national chains and "big-box" retailers capable of drawing customers from a wide geographical area. Such a strategy would not be feasible because it would be counter to the City's desire to create a more pedestrian friendly street life. This retail strategy would reduce pedestrian activity along City streets and avenues. Such a strategy also would be infeasible because it would be counter to City efforts to encourage transit. Such a strategy would only marginally be transit oriented because the number of people who use transit for shopping is small. A retail strategy also would have little potential for encouraging walking or bicycling. A retail strategy also would be infeasible because it would generate a large amount of new automobile traffic in El Cerrito. Nearly one-quarter of all City intersections would require mitigations. Adoption of a retail strategy also would not allow the City to meet its legal requirements for housing as contained in the Housing Element. There also is no evidence to indicate that the adoption of a retail strategy would aid the City in mitigating the unavoidable impacts identified in Section D of this resolution.
30. The fourth alternative studied would direct general plan policies to an increase in retail and housing. Implementation of this alternative would result in an increase of approximately 1,000 housing units over the life of the plan when compared to the revised General Plan. However, this alternative would produce approximately 50,000 sq. ft. less of retail space and 166,000 square feet less of office space. This alternative is not feasible because it is counter to the City's desire to create a more balanced local environment. Although the City is certainly in favor of increased housing supply, the City's long term best interests require development of office uses and a greater square footage of retail square footage even if this comes at the expense of such expanded new housing construction. Housing development pursuant to the revised General Plan will allow the City to satisfy its legal requirements under the Housing Element. It should be noted that a retail and housing strategy would produce slightly greater traffic impacts than under the revised General Plan. The traffic impacts resulting from this strategy would likely increase peak hour traffic because of its emphasis on housing production. Since the City already is impacted by increases in regional traffic, a housing strategy would exacerbate that impact because of the increase in peak hour traffic. There also is no evidence to indicate that the adoption of a housing and retail strategy would aid the City in mitigating the unavoidable impacts identified in Section D of this resolution.

F. STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

31. The City Council finds that adoption of the revised General Plan will provide numerous economic, social, environmental and other benefits to the City which override the unavoidable environmental impacts identified in Section D.
32. Implementation of the General Plan will strengthen the City's commercial base and increase housing opportunities in conformance with the City's adopted Housing Element. Implementation of the General Plan, in combination with the mitigation measures adopted into the Plan as General Plan policies, will contribute to the physical and economic revitalization of the City.
33. Adoption and implementation of the General Plan will provide increased revenues to the City through increased retail sales and increased property tax assessments. This will enable the City to ensure that services currently provided are continued.
34. The City Council hereby finds that the unavoidable impacts resulting from implementation of the revised General Plan are acceptable in light of the benefits to the City of implementing the revised General Plan for the following reasons:
 - a. The adoption of the revised General Plan will enable the City to satisfy its legal obligations under the law to adopt a general plan and keep it current. The adoption of this plan also will enable the City to achieve its obligations to provide housing as included in the City's Housing Element.
 - b. The revised General Plan will enable the City to achieve a balance between housing, office and retail development in a manner which will best secure El Cerrito's future. The Plan offers an opportunity for increased tax revenues, broadened employment opportunities, increased housing supply, and more transit oriented development.
 - c. There is no evidence in the record that any of the alternatives studied by the City as part of the EIR will eliminate or substantially lessen the unavoidable impacts at issue. Even if such evidence did exist, the alternatives to the revised General Plan do not meet the objectives of the City as to the future development of El Cerrito.
35. Based on the findings above, the City Council finds that economic and social considerations outweigh the unavoidable impacts resulting from implementation of the revised General Plan, and the City Council concludes that the revised General Plan should be approved and adopted, despite the future significant environmental consequences identified in the EIR.

G. ADOPTION OF THE MITIGATION MONITORING PLAN

36. Pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15091 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a local agency must adopt a mitigation monitoring plan for the monitoring of the mitigation measures incorporated into the project. Pursuant to Section 21081.6(b) of the Public Resources Code, in the case of a general plan, the mitigation measures may be incorporated into the plan as policies or regulations. This is the approach adopted by the City of El Cerrito which has incorporated the environmental mitigation measures identified in the EIR as designated policies of the revised General Plan.
37. The policies contained in the revised General Plan fall into five broad categories. The first category of policies call for the implementation of General Plan goals and requirements through the development review process. For example, Policy LU1.1 states that single-family neighborhoods should remain in predominantly single-family use by prohibiting incompatible uses. Another example is Policy LU1.3 which seeks to ensure that mixed use development and multifamily development in residential areas address compatibility and quality of life issues. Implementation of these policies can best be monitored through development review by the City planning and building departments and by project review by the Planning Commission, and if applicable, the City Council through the permitting system. Mitigation measures and conditions of approval can be imposed on discretionary project approvals to ensure implementation of this category of general plan policies.
38. A second category of general plan policies involve the accurate reporting of information to regional agencies and the City's continued participation and coordination with those agencies. For example, Policy GM 4.4 requires that the City submit required checklist materials to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority when requested. Policy PS 2.12 seeks to maintain City participation in existing joint response agreements for fire prevention and emergency safety purposes. Implementation of these policies can be monitored by the City police and fire departments with reports, on a periodic basis, to the City Manager and the City Council.
39. A third category of general plan policies seek the continued implementation of existing City laws and policies. For example, Policy CD3.4 states that open front yards should be maintained in residential streets. Such yards should not be enclosed with fences. Policy CD2.3 urges the City continue its program of street tree planting and improved roadway landscaping. Implementation of those policies which require the enforcement of existing City laws can best be monitored by the City building and planning departments with assistance by the City Attorney. The continuation of existing programs such as street tree planting can be monitored by the City Manager and the City Council as part of the budget process.

40. A fourth category of general plan policies seek the adoption of new City plans and standards. For example, Policy CD2.2 seeks the development of a design concept for San Pablo Avenue. Policy PS2.6 requires that the City review, amend and update relevant public codes and ordinances to incorporate new technologies and fire standards. Implementation of this category of policies can best be implemented by City staff in the planning, building and public safety departments. Implementation also may require review and approval by the Planning Commission, Design Review Board and the City Council.
41. The fifth category of general plan policies seek the adoption of new City initiatives. For example, Policy LU2.1 asks that the City promote retail, office and mixed use along San Pablo Avenue. Policy T-1.2 seeks that the City encourage transit providers to improve and increase existing transit routes, and the frequency and level of service. The monitoring of these initiatives will require direction from the City Council and implementation by City staff.
42. Section 65400 of the Government Code requires that the City's planning agency investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body on a yearly basis regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the general plan. That section also requires yearly reporting to designated State agencies concerning implementation of the policies contained in the general plan. Pursuant to Section 15097 of the State CEQA Guidelines, compliance with these statutory reporting requirements may be incorporated as a reporting program for adoption of a general plan. It is the intent of the City Council to utilize these reporting requirements in connection with the El Cerrito General Plan.

H. ADOPTION OF THE REVISED GENERAL PLAN

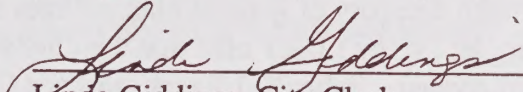
42. Having considered the entire record of the proceedings concerning the preparation and review of the revised General Plan as identified in paragraph 15 of this Resolution, the City Council does hereby adopt as the revised General Plan for the City of El Cerrito the Draft General Plan Update, dated March 31, 1999, along with Exhibits A, B and C attached hereto. These documents, together with the previously adopted Housing Element, shall constitute the General Plan for the City of El Cerrito.

I. DESIGNATION OF THE CUSTODIAN OF DOCUMENTS

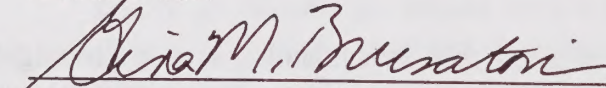
43. Pursuant to the requirements of Section 21081.6(a)(2) of the Public Resources Code, and Section 15091(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, the documents and materials which constitute the record of these proceedings on which the City Council's findings are based are located in the permanent files of the office of the Planning Manager at the El Cerrito City Hall.

I certify that at a regular meeting on August 30, 1999, the El Cerrito City Council passed this resolution by the following vote:

AYES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:	Bartke, Friedman, La Force
NOES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:	Damon, Brusatori
ABSENT:	COUNCILMEMBERS:	None

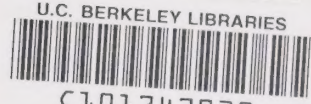

Linda Giddings, City Clerk

APPROVED:


Gina M. Brusatori, Mayor

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